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Sports Pg 18

Blue Jays face layoffs in front office

Ted Rogers lauded as a pioneer

OBITUARY Ted Rogers, the founder of the communications empire that bears his name, was lauded yesterday as a visionary pioneer and a titan in Canadian business as tributes poured in from business associates, friends and rivals after his death at 75.

The founder of Rogers Communications Inc. was admitted to hospital on Oct. 30 for treatment of an existing heart condition. He died at his Toronto home from congestive heart disease.

Rogers, who has long been listed as one of Canada's wealthiest people, handed over his corporate duties before going to hospital in October to Rogers chairman Alan Horn.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

LIFE AND TIMES, PAGE 4
WHAT'S NEXT?, PAGE 4
SPORTS FAN, PAGE 18

TOM HANSON PHOTOS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion, left, punctuates a point during question period in the House of Commons yesterday, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper responds to a Dion question. The two leaders were involved in a fierce exchange yesterday as the country waits to see what happens next with this political crisis.

The gloves are off

With political life hanging by a thread, Harper launches offensive

The political crisis now unfolding amid an economic storm gave rise yesterday to the fiercest parliamentary exchange in more than a decade, as Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper launched an all-out public relations war on his united opposition.

Fighting for his political life, Harper has given the nod to pep rallies, an advertising blitz and speeches by ministers to sway public opinion in his favour.

Harper faces almost certain defeat if a vote on an opposition motion of non-confidence goes ahead as scheduled on Monday. The Conservatives are considering a dramatic move to ask Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, who returns to Ottawa today after cutting short a European state visit, to discontinue — "prorogue" — the 40th Parliament as early as tomorrow to avoid the vote. Harper could then make a televised address to the nation to explain the decision.

The prime minister led the way yesterday in calling a proposed NDP-Liberal coalition that wants to replace him "undemocratic" and a threat to national unity. He derided it for handing the balance of power to "separatists" — an accusation his rivals mocked, citing Harper's own government's reliance on the Bloc Québécois to pass two budgets in the past.

In one of the most ferocious question periods since those that followed the 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendum, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion and Harper savaged each other yesterday over which leader could lay claim to a democratic mantle.

Dion, in a bid to pressure Harper into letting the non-confidence vote proceed, set the tone, throwing Harper's own words in May 2005, when Harper was Opposition leader, in his face.

"The whole principle of our democracy is the government is supposed to be able to face the House of Commons any day on a vote," Dion quoted Harper as saying.

But Harper retorted "the highest principle" of Canadian democracy is to have an elected mandate.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 8

Michaëlle Jean

- Michaëlle Jean became Canada's 27th Governor General in September 2005.
- Jean was born in Port au Prince, Haiti. She immigrated to Canada with her family in 1968, fleeing the dictatorial regime.
- She is fluent in five languages: French, English, Italian, Spanish and Creole.
- She is married to Jean-Daniel Lafond and the couple has an eight-year-old daughter, Marie-Éden.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

ENORMOUS TASK, PAGE 8

Canadians prefer coalition, but not Bloc or Dion led: Poll

A new Angus Reid Strategies poll on Canada's political crisis shows a majority of respondents nationally don't like the Conservative economic record, but are split on whether the government should be toppled.

If the government does fall, however, respondents don't want another election, instead preferring some form of coalition.

But they don't want a coalition led by Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion or held together with the support of the Bloc Québécois.

Says the poll: "57 per cent are worried about the Bloc Québécois becoming involved in the federal government; 64 per cent would not be comfortable with Stéphane Dion becoming Canada's prime minister."

The poll was conducted Dec. 1-2 by Angus Reid Strategies for CTV.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local pg 3

Council OKs charge for plastic bags

Travel pg 23

Magical Aussie tour

Automotive pg 29

Honda's Fit still a big hit

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Pregnant woman beaten in robbery
A thief put a six-months-pregnant convenience store clerk in Oshawa in a headlock and punched her repeatedly in the face, police say. The victim, 26, told police that on Monday evening, while one man beat her, another man grabbed cash from the till at the Cedar Street store. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

Gas prices keep falling

In these tough economic times, GTA motorists were enjoying the price of gas yesterday. This station at Victoria Park and Gerrard Street East was selling at 76.9 cents a litre in the morning. According to Pickering-Scarborough East MP Dan McTeague, who is an expert on gas market prices, there will be a one cent price drop by today.

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What's online today.

Watch the life, legacy and accomplishments of Ted Rogers at **metronews.ca/canada**

Watch Canadians react to Ottawa drama with both glee and outrage at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 4 3 6; **Ontario Pick 4** : 2 5 6 7
Encore: 5583981
Daily Keno: 8, 13, 15, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 51, 53, 62, 65, 69.
These results are not official.

Plastic bag fee voted in

Council's axe falls on bottled water

Toronto shoppers will start paying 5 cents for throw-away plastic shopping bags starting June 1, Toronto council has voted.

And despite a determined lobby from bottled water companies to block the measure, councillors voted to ban the sale or distribution of bottled water immediately at City Hall and the city's civic centres where contracts permit.

Bottled water at other city-owned facilities such as arenas and theatres will be banned by the end of 2011.

Retailers will be required to accept reusable bags or containers from shoppers starting next June.

Mayor David Miller said "free" shopping bags really aren't cost free.

"There's a cost to the city and the people of Toronto in disposing of them, there's a cost to the environment and there's a cost to the retailers," Miller said after the vote.

Miller also defended the city's moves to push bottled water out of its own facilities, arguing the city produces its own high quality water.

"I don't believe as Canada's largest purveyor of tap water we should be selling water in our facilities," he said.

Canada's biggest grocery companies had negotiated the 5-cent bag fee with city officials prior to the meeting.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Tally

- The final vote wasn't close: 30 in favour of the bag and bottle measures, and 13 against.

York strike **Students protest**

LUCAS OLENIUK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

York University students hold up signs outside Queen's Park yesterday to protest the ongoing staff strike at the university. Dozens of students attended the Grinch-themed rally, demanding government intervention in ending the 28-day strike.

Court shuffle for accused man

CRIME A Brampton man charged in a weekend murder was slipped into a Brampton court yesterday away from media awaiting his appearance in another courtroom.

Christopher Hurd, 28, was formally charged with first-degree murder in Sunday's beating death of Loretta Lavalley. He was remanded in custody until a video-link appearance on Dec. 16.

Hurd was to appear yesterday in Brampton's 101 court but a clerk announced his case was to be transferred to 102 court.

Half a dozen reporters and media sketch artists went there, only to learn Hurd had appeared half an hour earlier. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Warrant issued in theft spree

CRIME He is a few inches shorter and about 20 pounds lighter than the suspect — a man residents say has broken into more than 40 east-end homes in the past two months.

And his feet would have to fit the size 11½ red and black sneakers left outside one of the compromised dwellings on the weekend.

But Jason Losier, 31, is a person of interest in the mysterious string of break-ins that have kept police hopping lately and have prompted locals to seal their windows and lock their front doors. A warrant has been issued for Losier's arrest.

"We haven't linked him directly to the 40 break-ins," Det. Dan Powell said yesterday. "But we're working on it."

At 5-foot-8 and 150 pounds, with brown hair, Losier comes close to matching the description of a thief most of the invaded residents spotted only briefly.

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Rogers owns a wide variety of assets

In addition to the Rogers cable, wireless, radio and television businesses, the company owns the Toronto Blue Jays and their home, the Rogers Centre, five Citytv stations, the Shopping Channel and Omni TV and an array of other media properties including Maclean's and Chatelaine magazines. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO

Ted Rogers displays some of the equipment in 1989 that was the focal point of an ambitious high-tech program for cellular telephone coverage and the age of high-definition TV.

A man with vision

Ted Rogers dialled one radio station into $25B empire

His business card read, "Ted Rogers, Senior Salesperson."

It could have easily said, Electronic Visionary, Sleepless CEO or Relentless Entrepreneur, as Rogers, with his trademark determination, became Canada's most successful businessman, transforming his name into a countrywide brand that signified digital television, high-speed Internet, cellular telephones and Major League Baseball.

Rogers' hunger for success, combined with an ability to envision technological change years before his competitors (and a tolerance for debt) lifted his business from one fledgling radio station into a $25-billion Canadian institution.

He died at his Toronto home yesterday morning, at the age of 75, after spending several weeks in hospital with an illness related to an ongoing heart problem.

Turning Rogers Communications Inc. into a blue chip empire was his greatest ambition.

He accomplished this against the enduring backdrop of a ticking clock: An ambition hastened by his father's early death and a lifetime of precarious health; and, an inability to slow his impatient intellect for the pace of others.

Rogers was born on May 27, 1933, a small sickly son, for Velma and Edward Rogers. In his autobiography, Relentless, written with business consultant Robert Brehl, Rogers said in his first year of life he lost partial sight in his right eye, due to infant celiac disorder, which played havoc with his digestive system.

Rogers boarded at Upper Canada College in north Toronto. It was here, in 1949 and 1950, where he recognized there was truth to the adage, like father, like son. He installed a cable in his room, attached to a hidden rooftop antenna, and connected it to a television set. "Viewers were invited to gather around, for a small fee, to watch the marvels of television."

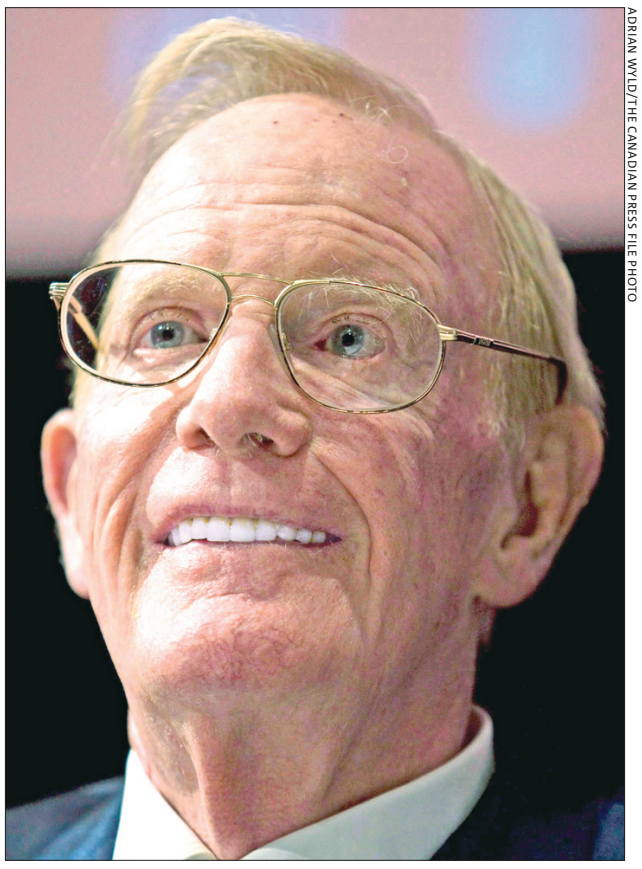
He attended University of Toronto, graduated with a law degree from Osgoode Law School at York University.

He found time to woo and marry a young woman named Loretta Robinson, and together they would have four children, Lisa, Edward, Melinda and Martha.

By 1967, he envisioned a new future — cable television. He started Rogers Cable T.V. Ltd., ignoring the naysayers who predicted its imminent demise.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Watch the life, legacy and accomplishments of Ted Rogers at metronews.ca/canada



ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

Rogers Communications Inc. president and CEO Ted Rogers speaks with the media prior to the company's annual general meeting in Toronto in April. Rogers died at his Toronto home yesterday at the age of 75.

What's next?
for Rogers Communications

Canada's largest cellphone operator and cable TV company will likely take a more conservative turn as it moves ahead without its founder and CEO Ted Rogers, who died early yesterday, analysts say.

Although Rogers always made it clear he expected Rogers Communications Inc. to stay in his family's control after his death, it's likely Nadir Mohamed, president of the company's cable TV, wireless and home phone divisions, will be named CEO for the time being.

"Nadir Mohamed is clearly the man to take the job," said Jesse Hirsh, a technology analyst.

Ted's daughter Melinda Rogers, currently senior vice-president of strategy and development, and his son Edward Rogers, who runs the company's cable TV operations, have both been touted as possible successors to their father.

But Hirsh said both Rogers children need to be groomed before they will be ready to take over their father's legacy.

Rogers chief financial officer Bill Linton has also been mentioned as a possible successor.

A statement from Rogers Communications said a permanent successor as chief executive will be appointed by the company's board, "which intends to form a special committee to lead a search considering internal and external candidates."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quotes

"Ted Rogers represented the gold standard when it comes to great Canadians. He will be sorely missed."
John Tory

"Today we honour the memory of a man who was not only a leader in telecommunications, but also one of the greatest, if not the greatest, entrepreneur that Canada has known."
Pierre Karl Peladeau, president and CEO of Quebecor Inc.

"Mr. Rogers will always be remembered as a supporter of sports in the city as evident when he purchased the Toronto Blue Jays in 2000, effectively integrating his media and sports businesses."
MLSE statement

Gunman was reckless, Crown tells Creba trial

A young man charged with second-degree murder in the death of Jane Creba is as guilty as the man who actually fired the fatal bullet because he recklessly exchanged gunshots on crowded Yonge Street, a prosecutor says.

The accused, who can be identified only as J.S.R., must have known that when he fired south on a street packed with Boxing Day 2005 shoppers, trying to kill a north-facing gunman, that death would result, Kerry Hughes told a jury in her final arguments yesterday.

Jane Creba

J.S.R., 20, is charged with second-degree murder in the 15-year-old schoolgirl's death, weapons offences, and six counts of aggravated assault for the six people injured at the scene.

Although J.S.R. did not shoot Creba, he was a "significant contributing cause" of her death, the prosecutor said.

The Crown and defence agree that a man called Jeremiah Valentine was at the scene that day. The defence alleges Valentine is the north-facing shooter who fired the fatal round.

Valentine, Louis Woodcock, Tyshaun Barnett, Andrew Smith, Vincent Davis, Andre Thompson, his brother Shaun Thompson and a youth are also charged in Creba's death. They are yet to be tried.

The defence makes its closing submissions today.

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Erin Mills Town Centre
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Cigarettes worth $50,000 stolen at knifepoint
Robbers held a knife to the throat of a Sam's Club employee in Pickering during a Monday night theft of more than $50,000 in cigarettes, police said. Three men are being sought. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Support staff back deal

Contract with TDSB provides 3 per cent a year pay hikes

The union representing a wide range of school administrative and support staff has ratified a four-year collective agreement with the Toronto District School Board, with 98.7 per cent ratifying the deal.

It provides a salary increase of 3 per cent a year for four years and improved benefits, said John Weatherup, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees local 4400.

The deal also creates about 30 new school secretary positions and 40 additional caretaking jobs that Weatherup called "improvements in staffing levels for safety reasons."

Also, educational assistants working with special needs students will see their hours of work increase.

"Those would be the big items," he said.

The union also knocked back concessions the board sought from caretakers, bus drivers and warehouse staff, according to the CUPE 4400 website.

The union fought concessions, including the possibility of split shifts and use of casual workers.

"This deal is fair and I am happy that we have been able to negotiate this agreement with CUPE," board chair John Campbell said in a statement.

"This agreement provides for enhanced student safety and solidifies the Board's commitment to continuing to improve its relationships with all its employees."

Negotiations began this summer and stretched until the parties reached a tentative deal late Friday.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Voting

- CUPE 4400 members voted on the proposal in a series of meetings over three days and ultimately supported the deal by 98.7 per cent, according to the union website.

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Facelift planned for social housing

Melanie Peters sits despondent in the small living room of her Church Street apartment. She's just learned that her home for five years, Toronto Community Housing Corp.'s apartment building at 389 Church St., is one of three multi-unit properties recommended to be sold in a report on the state of the agency's housing stock.

"Why are they deciding this now after so much time and money went into this place? ...Why all of a sudden is it a strain on the pocketbook?"
Melanie Peters

"Why are they deciding this now after so much time and money went into this place?" says Peters. "Why all of a sudden is it a strain on the pocketbook?"

At 257 Dundas St. E., a rooming house also slated to be sold, a resident who gave his name as "Patch" said he couldn't wait to get out. "This is a crack house, plain and simple," he said.

The average community housing unit has a "poor" rating, according to an industry formula used to evaluate the properties. Under the Facilities Condition Index (FCI), the current average rating is 16 per cent. Officials are aiming for an average of 12 per cent ("fair") by 2018 for its 58,500 housing units.

Yesterday TCHC representatives unveiled a 10-year, $950 million spending plan to meet that target, including $600 million from existing budgets, revenue and savings, and a hoped-for $126 million from property tax exemptions.

The three multi-unit buildings and 45 single-family homes on the block are worth about $35 million to $40 million.

Many units are already vacant and in such bad shape there's "no reasonable way to invest and bring them back to a reasonable state of good repair," agency CEO Derek Ballantyne said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Alternative drugs cheaper, safer: Report

PANEL A new analysis of clinical trials of a controversial anti-bleeding drug used in heart surgery says that cheaper, safer alternatives work nearly as well and should be recommended.

The review was rushed to print yesterday by the Canadian Medical Association Journal in advance of a hearing today of a panel of experts who have been asked to advise Health Canada on use of the drug, aprotinin.

Aprotinin, sold under the brand name Trasylol, was used to reduce bleeding and minimize the need for blood transfusions during coronary artery bypass surgery. Made by Bayer Inc., the drug was thought to be more effective than older anti-bleeding therapies tranexamic acid and aminocaproic acid.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trial

- A clinical trial comparing aprotinin to the alternatives was stopped in October 2007 when it was found that the rate of deaths among people who got aprotinin was 50 per cent higher than that of the people who got two older anti-bleeding drugs.

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*Includes all taxes and freight. Prizes may not be exactly as shown.

More animals, fewer people on Canadian farms: StatsCan

A Statistics Canada study released yesterday suggests there are more animals and fewer people on Canadian farms. The farming population fell to a historic low in 2006, according to the study, while the number of cattle and chickens has doubled and the number of pigs tripled. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Battle over coalition heads online

Conservative Internet sluggers are in full swing as the Tories' battle against a prospective Liberal-NDP coalition government hits fever pitch online. Pro-coalition forces are up against a mighty Conservative cyber machine that kicked in moments after Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion announced his historic entente with NDP head Jack Layton, backed by the separatist Bloc Québécois. Conservative reaction in the blogosphere and on social-network sites was swift and furious. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadians riveted, outraged

The drama unfolding in Ottawa with all the intrigue of a well-crafted political thriller has riveted Canadians across the country — both political junkies and citizens who turned out in such anemic numbers for the federal election barely seven weeks ago.

With Ontario's Premier Dalton McGuinty urging an end to the political crisis and calling on the feds to start dealing with the floundering economy yesterday, Canadians weren't leaving the talking to the politicians.

Talk-show phone lines buzzed with a seldom-seen fervour and media websites groaned under a flood of feedback.

"Wow. Never have I seen more regular people upset at politicians," a reader from British Columbia wrote on the Globe and Mail's website, which was on track for a record-setting day yesterday in terms of the number of reader comments.

It seemed most everyone — those furious at the hijacking of democracy and those blissful at democracy working exactly as it should — had a strong opinion.

"This is what bullies in a schoolyard do when they can't win a fight fair and square — gang up," read another post on the Globe's site.

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Reporters hang around the halls of Parliament Hill during question period in Ottawa yesterday.

Daniela Scoppa, a producer with radio station CJAD in Montreal, said the phone lines were jammed for close to three hours during their morning talk show yesterday.

"People are just appalled. They can't believe that any of this is going on; they're disgusted by it," Scoppa said.

"That's the word most people use: Just completely and utterly disgusted."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quotes

"It's incredibly heated — it's probably the most intense that I can recall in several years. People are very engaged on all sides of the issue."
Bill Good, host with CKNW Radio, Vancouver

"I think one of the worst ideas in the world is having the separatist party governing Canada, even as part, when they want to break it up."
Gayle Parr, Langley, B.C.

"(The Conservatives have) been a little too arrogant ... Right now, (Prime Minister Stephen) Harper needs to be taken down a peg or two."
Doug Campbell, Toronto

Enormous task ahead for governor general

POLITICS Having spent the past week in a flurry of handshakes and speeches, Governor General Michaëlle Jean is coming home to hole herself up with books and advisers to grapple with a crisis that places the fate of the government in her hands.

"I'm sure she has trusted confidants in her office, but at the end of the day, she has to sit down and ask herself what's the right thing to do in the national interest,"constitutional scholar Paul Thomas of the University of Manitoba said of the task facing Jean as she returns to Ottawa today after cutting short her four-country European tour.

"At the end of the day, (Michaëlle Jean) has to sit down and ask herself what's the right thing to do in the national interest."
Paul Thomas

It appears increasingly likely Jean will face a request from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to prorogue, or shut down, the current parliamentary session before opposition parties get the chance to kick him out next week in the hopes of taking power with a coalition government.

She has the power to refuse him — a power that constitutional scholars and a former governor general say must be exercised with extreme caution, but nonetheless remains important as she fulfils her duties to maintain stability.

Before Jean makes up her mind she will consult with a number of discreet advisers — both an in-house legal team and any number of others from a variety of fields and political leanings — who will help her wade through a constitution that is often ambiguous or even silent on the most complicated of issues.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Albertans raging against developments in Ottawa

REACTION Nationally, the Conservatives dominate no region as thoroughly as the West, and people in Alberta are fuming over the coalition threat that's taken over Ottawa.

The phone lines have been lit up at local radio shows with calls promoting a massive rally in Calgary on Saturday. The rally is expected to draw thousands, with one estimate pegging possible turnout as high as 20,000.

A rumour that Alberta's 27 Conservative MPs are planning to resign en masse is being cheered by disgruntled voters.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

LISTERIOSIS Government officials and political aides were deeply concerned about critical media coverage at the height of the listeriosis crisis, new documents show. Notes taken during daily conference calls with political staff and public servants suggest much of the time was spent scrutinizing the tone and tenor of news reports.

INDUSTRY The slumping economy could actually be a boon for certain entertainment companies as consumers seek some escapism from their financial stress, industry watchers say. The owners of movie theatres, rental stores and video-game companies are banking on increased revenues during this tough economic period. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Kidnapped snake found safe and sound
A popular snake named Tickles, a 1.5-metre-long royal ball python, has been found alive and well after being kidnapped four months ago from the Saskatoon zoo. THE CANADIAN PRESS

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO CANADA

Maxine Vukic Martell outside St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver.

Celebrating 20 years of heart transplants in B.C.

KRISTEN THOMPSON
Metro Canada

Maxine Vukic Martell was 12 when the first heart transplant in British Columbia was performed 20 years ago yesterday.

Less than a decade after that milestone surgery Martell learned she had a heart condition that necessitated a transplant.

"I was terrified," she said yesterday at an anniversary celebration at St. Paul's hospital. "Life was just starting."

Martell received a new heart when she was 24, and since then got married, bought a house and is thinking about starting a family.

"To be alive … doing all the things I didn't think would be possible to do is wonderful," she said, adding that it's hard to know that her life was extended because someone else's was cut short.

Minister of Health George Abbott, who also attended the event, broke down in tears remembering how his friend, Tony Beeftink, one of the province's first heart transplant recipients, almost died before his surgery.

"I've known him and his family for 25 years," Abbott said.

"He's taught all my kids in school."

"The last 20 years have been a build up to the next few months," he said.

Retirement not so golden

As the economy sinks, so do the nest eggs of thousands

Leon Berezowski takes a careful step onto the driveway. Patches of ice cover the black asphalt leading to the porch of the house — making even the short trek from sidewalk to mailbox a treacherous one.

"Look at this," he says, shaking his head. He points a gloved finger at the walkway in front of a small bungalow in his central Etobicoke neighbourhood.

"It's like an ice rink." He's wearing his "sturdy boots" but for a moment he hesitates. At 71, he's not one to take risks. But at 71, he knows he can't avoid them either.

The retired pressman signed up a year ago to deliver the community paper twice a week to 55 houses on his street. His wife, Marie, said it would be a good way to keep active and meet the neighbours. The money he made — around $100 a month — was a bonus.

Six months later, the world has changed.

"Will (the economy) go back up again? If it's going to be in 25 years, I'm not going to be here."
71-year-old Leon Berezowski

Changes he reads in the paper: failing businesses, struggling banks and bankrupt industries; changes that resonate in the financial statements he receives each month; changes he never saw coming.

At a time when many seniors expected financial freedom, the economic crisis is forcing a growing number to face the harrowing reality that their nest eggs will run out before they do.

As the stock market has plunged, so has confidence among older workers that they will be able to retire as comfortably as planned, or worse, be able to retire at all. A sizeable number of almost-retirees in Canada — around 30 per cent — plan to keep working past 65.

Some, like Berezowski, have turned to part-time employment, working at coffee shops or in retail. But many are holding tight, keeping their money where it is and hoping to survive the downturn.

"Everyone keeps saying it will recover. But will it go back up again?" he asks. "If it's going to be in 25 years, I am not going to be here. So you just have to hope that things turn around sooner."

Marie Berezowski's friends turn to her to talk about their losses. "It seems like everyone has a story the older you get," says Marie. Like the friend who grieves over her husband's death five years ago from cancer. "It makes me realize I have so much to be thankful for," she says.

The couple aren't ones to dwell on the future or the past. There are bills to pay, lessons to take and holes to play. Living in the present suits them fine.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Rescuers search for four men after cargo ship sinks

A cargo ship carrying a load of road salt to the French islands of St-Pierre-Miquelon capsized and sank off Newfoundland yesterday, triggering a search for four crew members.

Bruno Arantzabe, an official at the St-Pierre Port Authority, said the cargo ship Cap Blanc left Argentia, N.L., in the middle of the night for a 12-hour voyage home.

It capsized at some point and later sank in about 130 metres of water in the afternoon.

Arantzabe said everyone in the French-owned islands was concerned for the safety of the four men.

"They are all friends," he said.

"It is a small community here,'' he said by phone. "We are only 5,000 inhabitants.. It is a big disaster for us." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Toronto Eaton Centre
Upper Canada Mall
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Yorkdale Mall

Obama to tap Richardson for commerce secretary: Democratic officials

Democratic officials say U.S. president-elect Barack Obama plans to name New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson as his choice for commerce secretary. The officials say Obama will join Richardson at a news conference in Chicago for the announcement today. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Canada expects U.S. queries

The whole world is watching and our closest ally — the United States — is worried as Canada goes through a "constitutional psychodrama," Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon said yesterday. Cannon told the Commons he expected president-elect Barack Obama's nominee for secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, to ask about the stability of Canada's government when they have their first conversation today. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

India warned of attack: U.S.

The United States warned the Indian government beforehand that terrorists appeared to be plotting an assault on Mumbai, officials said yesterday.

Evidence also suggested that the brutal, prolonged attack on India's financial capital has some roots in Pakistan, said a senior U.S. State Department official, who asked to remain anonymous.

That's the closest the U.S. has come to placing blame for the co-ordinated assaults, though the official was careful to say that not all the evidence was in.

Indian authorities have claimed a Pakistan connection for days, but the United States has not wanted to "jump to conclusions," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Monday.

The Bush administration fears that any misstep amid the extraordinarily high emotions surrounding the three-day assault, which killed 172 and wounded 239 in the heart of Mumbai, could spark new and possibly deadly tensions between long-time, nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan.

Two Canadians and six Americans were among those killed in the Mumbai attacks.

The revelation of a U.S. warning to Indian counterparts about a possible coming attack comes as the Indian government faces widespread accusations of security and intelligence failures in the wake of the assault. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rice to play peacemaker

- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is set to visit India today, carrying the U.S. demand that Pakistan co-operate fully in the investigation into the attacks and try to cool cross-border tempers with India.

Thai PM quits, airport flights to resume

CONFLICT Anti-government demonstrators in Thailand declared victory yesterday and said they will end their occupation of the country's two main airports after a court decision forced the country's prime minister from office.

While an estimated 300,000 travellers stranded by last week's airport takeovers breathed a bit easier, the question of who will hold power in a democratic Thailand remained unanswered. At least six people have been killed and scores injured in clashes in recent months.

Dozens of Canadians have been stranded in the capital Bangkok for the past week, including a number who have run out of medications or travel insurance.

Some of them accepted a deal worked out by the Canadian Embassy to fly out of a Bangkok-area naval base to Hong Kong aboard a commercial airliner at their own expense.

ED WRAY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thailand security officers once again patrol the Suvarnabhumi Airport, which anti-government protesters have shut down for nearly a week.

Meanwhile, two Canadians died in a crash trying to leave the country.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said the men died Monday.

According to the Daily Telegraph newspaper, police said the men were in a van that overturned on the way to Phuket international airport. Three Canadians and a British tourist were also injured in the crash.

Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon has said that "upwards of 1,000 Canadians" have been affected by the shutdown of Bangkok's airports. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sentencing date set for old Obama fundraiser

COURT A federal judge in Chicago has set a Jan. 6 sentencing for political fundraiser Tony Rezko, who helped bankroll the campaigns of Barack Obama and Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Rezko, convicted in June of mail fraud and other counts, wasn't in court yesterday.

But his lawyer, Joseph Duffy, says Rezko asked for an early sentencing date and just "wants to get on with his life."

Duffy made the comment while leaving court yesterday where Judge Amy St. Eve, who handled the Conrad Black trial, set the sentencing date.

Duffy left open the question of whether Rezko is still co-operating with the government's investigation of corruption in the Blagojevich administration.

Rezko was a major fundraiser for Obama in his campaigns in Illinois, but did not raise money in his presidential campaign. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GM, Ford CEOs driving to Washington in hybrids

AUTOS Eager to avoid another scathing lecture about corporate excess from Congress, the CEOs of the two biggest U.S. automakers will travel to Washington this week in hybrid vehicles made by their companies.

Ford Motor Co. CEO Alan Mulally left for Washington yesterday afternoon, driving in a Ford Escape small sport utility vehicle that runs on gas and electricity.

General Motors Corp. CEO Rick Wagoner will travel in a hybrid Chevrolet Malibu.

Both men, along with Chrysler LLC CEO Robert Nardelli and United Auto Workers President Ron Gettelfinger, will appear before congressional committees tomorrow and Friday to justify why the automakers should get $25 billion US in federal loans to help them through a terrible economic slump.

Chrysler won't say how Nardelli will travel, but said it won't be by corporate jet.

The move to travel like regular folks comes after the CEOs' last visit for hearings in November, when legislators found out that all three had flown in separate corporate jets to ask for the bailout dollars, and many harangued them for their excess. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sales drop

- The automakers' sales continue to plunge as consumers halt big-ticket spending amid the credit crunch, with GM posting a 41 per cent drop in November sales yesterday and Ford reporting a 31 per cent monthly decline.

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North Korean leader visits Pyongyang zoo: Report

North Korean leader Kim Jong Il went to the Pyongyang zoo and visited the tigers, bears and aquarium, state-run media said yesterday, the latest in a spate of reports depicting Kim as fit three months after his reported stroke. None of the reports provide an exact date for his appearances, but they appear to be recent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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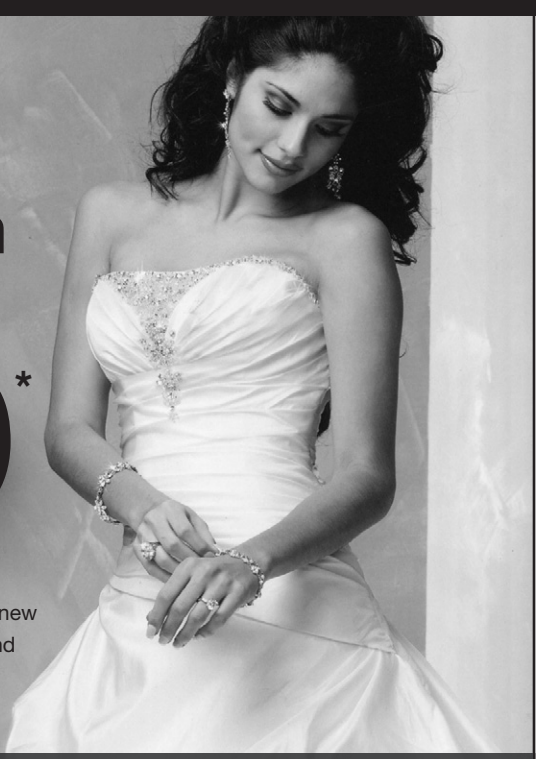

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Formal charges laid against Hudson kin

Jennifer Hudson's estranged brother-in-law was charged yesterday with three counts of first-degree murder in the shooting deaths of three of her family members.

Prosecutors handed down formal charges against William Balfour in the deaths of Hudson's mother, brother and seven-year-old nephew, said Tandra Simonton, spokeswoman for the Cook County state's attorney's office.

Balfour had been in custody on a parole violation since the bodies of Hudson's mother, Darnell Hudson Donerson, and brother, Jason Hudson, were discovered in their home Oct. 24. The body of young Julian King, Balfour's stepson, was found in a sport utility vehicle three days later.

"It is scary as hell. (William Balfour is) charged with terrible crimes that he adamantly contends he's not guilty of."
Joshua Kutnick

All three had been shot to death.

Until Monday, police had publicly identified Balfour only as a "person of interest" in the investigation.

Balfour's lawyer said he talked to his client yesterday morning and that he reiterated his innocence.

"It is scary as hell. He's charged with terrible crimes that he adamantly contends he's not guilty of," Joshua Kutnick said before the announcement of the charges, which he said he expected.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

CLIMATE The United States and other rich countries are being criticized at climate-change talks underway in Poland. Environmental activists say industrialized countries are resisting setting long-term targets for cutting greenhouse gases unless developing countries make similar sacrifices.

WORK Doctors-in-training are still too exhausted, says a new report that calls on hospitals to let them have a nap. Yesterday, the prestigious Institute of Medicine recommended that anyone working the maximum 30-hour shift should get an uninterrupted five-hour break for sleep after 16 hours.

BUSH Former U.S. first lady Barbara Bush has been released from a Houston hospital a week after undergoing ulcer surgery.

MELAMINE The Hong Kong government says it has found excessive amounts of the industrial chemical melamine in another batch of eggs from mainland China. China has been struggling to get melamine out of its food chain after it was found in infant formula and other dairy products.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nixon **Vietnam retrospective**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former U.S. president Richard M. Nixon, right, walks with Melvin Laird in 1973. Documents released yesterday shed new light on just how much the Nixon White House struggled with growing public unrest over the protracted war in Vietnam.

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Saturn Aura
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(Hybrid shown)

Saturn Vue
2008 AJAC Award – Best New SUV/CUV
$35,000–$60,000
(Hybrid shown)

Pontiac Vibe
2009 AJAC Award – Best new small car over $18,000

Chevrolet Malibu
2008 North American Car of the Year
(Hybrid shown)

*Awarded by North American International Auto shows. 1. Chevrolet Tahoe Hybrid named 2008 Green Car of the Year by Green Car Journal editors. **2008 Best New Small Car awarded to Saturn Astra. 2009 Best New Small Car over $18,000 awarded to Pontiac Vibe. †Based on GM Testing in accordance with approved Transport Canada Test methods. Your actual fuel consumption may vary.

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Comment & Views

Comment

Blame the boomers

Is it any wonder why our kids turned out this way?

LifeCycle

Denise Rudnicki
drudnicki@gmail.com

If youth is wasted on the young then maybe love is too. How else to explain yet another young woman selling her virginity on the web, or the blogs, books and TV shows promoting starter marriages?

I was talking to a young friend about relationships. I wondered how she meets guys.

Do she and her friends go to bars? "Oh no," she said. She and her friends might go to bars to meet a guy for a one-night fling but to find a meaningful relationship, they go online.

And what do they do, I asked, once they've found these meaningful relationships. Do they marry? "Lol," she said. Why would they marry? Why bother?

My generation is to blame for this laissez-faire attitude toward love and commitment.

We raised kids with an attention span of about three minutes, with a pick and choose attitude toward life, who select a career based on how much vacation time it gives them, who think happiness and success are a right, and who blame everyone but themselves when they are unhappy or fail.

We raised them to believe they are the centre of the universe and that no one is better or smarter or more talented than they are.

We let them think they need a $500 prom dress when they graduate Grade 8, that their self-esteem depends on the latest technological gadget and that thong underwear is perfectly acceptable for preteens.

My generation is to blame for this laissez-faire attitude toward love and commitment.

We thought we were protecting them when we taught them about good touch/bad touch, but we let them loose in an Internet world that treats sex like a vicious recreational pastime.

We taught them that it's OK to flee a marriage and bust up a family because one or the other of their parents isn't 'happy.'

Don't worry, we still love you, and here's a trip to Jamaica to prove it, but gotta go 'cause I've been unhappy for years.

This generation views divorce as an acceptable social trend.

Yet they've also been raised to believe if they're going to marry, they have to do it in the style and with the budget of royalty.

We raised a generation of kids from broken homes, egomaniacs with poor self-esteem, consumers always on the prowl for new and improved products, people who go to clubs for casual sex and who look to Internet sites to find a meaningful relationship that doesn't include marriage.

For this generation, maybe love is a dish best served cold.

Denise Rudnicki is a West Coast-based writer, communications executive, and journalism instructor at Royal Roads University.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Word on the street: Will you be giving money to a Christmas charity this year despite the global economic downturn?

Marnie Fitzsimons
age 19, Toronto
A: Yes I will. Just because I've lost a little money recently doesn't mean I shouldn't help people less fortunate.

David Sistilli
age 21, Vaughan
A: Yes, probably. Because any money will help. It doesn't have to be $100 or $500 but every little bit makes a difference.

MaryAnn Mihychuk
age 53, Toronto
A: You betcha. I'm one of the fortunate ones so I try to do what I can.

Shafin Karim
age 38, Vancouver
A: It's even more important right now with the economy the way it is. Were all kind of in the same boat.

Graham Hart
age 21, Dartmouth, N.S.
A: I definitely plan on giving to charity, probably in the form of donating time for charity.

metro life panel

Metro Life Panel

Results from the Canadian Metro Life Panel (357 respondents):

Yes: 25%
No: 7 %
Don't know: 68 %

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Letters

Harper has made a believer out of some in Canada

Why can't we just give the Conservatives a chance to rule the country and see what happens? Why can't we just give Mr. Harper some trust, some time and some respect he deserves as a prime minister elected by the people?

It seems that Mr. Dion is still not accepting his defeat and is trying to save his own face — no matter what it takes, no matter how against the values of the people, his party, and the country. If another election is unavoidable, I believe Mr. Harper will still be our prime minister.

YAN ZHOU, TORONTO

Put away your partisan ways and put the economy first

It is sickening to watch the eyes of opposition leaders in Ottawa aglow with arrogant greed for power at a time when the country can least afford it.

The prospect of a coalition with Stéphane Dion as prime minister, Jack Layton as finance minister, where the Bloc Québécois, a party dedicated to the breakup of Canada, would hold the hammer is worrisome indeed. Come now you elected officials, your performance as of late is like a five-year-old having a temper tantrum. Please shed your diaper-stage performances, drop your partisanship and start tackling the task at hand: a deteriorating economy.

GERTIE POOL, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

"Indian Terrorists" headline mislead readers on attacks

The news item about terror attacks on Mumbai in your weekend edition Nov. 28 sends the wrong picture to your readers.

The headline "Indian terrorists behind attacks?" is highly misleading. So far everybody knows that the terrorists came from outside (allegedly from Pakistan through sea routes) seeking help from some locals, it does not mean they were Indian terrorists. It was highly irresponsible on the part of your editorial to go with that the headline. Over a million Indo-Canadians live in Canada and a lot of them, over 400,000, live in the GTA. You are rubbing salt in their wounds.

SHAIL PRASAD, MISSISSAUGA

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Scotiabank profits drop to $315M
The Bank of Nova Scotia says fourth-quarter profits fell 67 per cent to $315 million partly on a $642-million after-tax writedown related to the credit crisis. Scotiabank shares dropped 95 cents to $33.90 on the Toronto Stock Exchange. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Sierra Wireless bids for Wavecom

TAKEOVER Vancouver-based Sierra Wireless announced the biggest deal in its history yesterday, a $345-million bid for Wavecom, a French provider of computer-to-computer wireless communication equipment. The deal will create a global leader in wireless data technology for mobile computing and machine-to-machine applications.

Sierra's offer is 21 per cent above the price proposed in October by Gemalto, a French digital-security specialist, which launched a hostile bid opposed by Wavecom's board. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

In brief

LABOUR A rights official says Europe has a hidden labour market in which workers exist in "slave-like" conditions. It involves both undocumented foreign nationals and EU citizens often found in low-end jobs such as farm labourers or domestics. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Auto sales in ditch

Biggest percentage drop in four-and-a-half years

The worsening North American economic storm has finally driven Canada's auto market into the ditch.

After showing strong resilience to deteriorating conditions for most of the year, showroom business slid 10.3 per cent or more than 12,000 vehicles to 105,221 here in November from the same month last year, manufacturers reported yesterday.

November's decline marked the biggest percentage drop in sales for any month in Canada in 4½ years. It was also the worst November for auto sales here in a decade.

On the rise

- Toyota Canada sales, including Lexus, climbed 1.9 per cent to a record 12,792.
- Ford of Canada sales were up 1.1 per cent to 16,144.
- Mazda Canada sales up 6.6 per cent to 5,024.
- Nissan, including Infiniti, up 1.5 per cent to 4,929.

GM, Honda and Chrysler led the losers in Canada last month despite more heavy incentives for the holiday season.

Sales at industry leader GM plunged 23.5 per cent to 21,486 while Chrysler's business dropped 15.5 per cent. Honda's sales including the Acura luxury brand tumbled 32.6 per cent to 9,224.

Overall sales through the first 11 months are still up one-half of a per cent in Canada. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Manulife planning massive stock sale

LOSS Shares of Manulife Financial Corp. swooned yesterday after the insurance giant warned about a looming fourth-quarter loss of $1.5 billion and unveiled plans to raise up to $2.13 billion by selling new common shares.

The quarterly loss would be Manulife's first since going public in 1999. Its massive stock sale, meanwhile, marked a dramatic about-face for its outgoing chief executive, who dismissed the need for such a move just weeks ago.

CEO Dominic D'Alessandro said last month that a $3-billion term loan from Canada's biggest banks would bolster Manulife's capital position. Now the company plans to reduce the size of that credit facility to $2 billion.

Investors appeared unimpressed. Manulife's shares lost 2.79 per cent, or 57 cents, to $19.89 during heavy trading on the TSX. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

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Phelps named SI's sportsman of the year

U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps was honoured as Sports Illustrated's sportsman of the year yesterday. Phelps broke Mark Spitz's record with eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics in August and became the winningest Olympian ever with his 14 career victories. METRO NEWS SERVICES

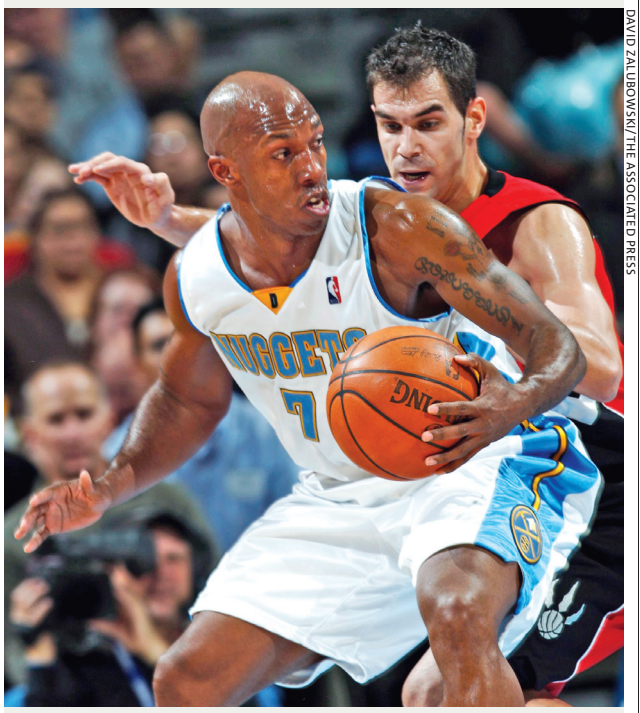
Sports

Avery suspended for comment

The NHL suspended the Stars' Sean Avery before last night's game in Calgary due to lewd comments made regarding his former girlfriend, actress Elisha Cuthbert, and her current boyfriend, Flames defenceman Dion Phaneuf. "I just want to comment on how it's become like a common thing in the NHL for guys to fall in love with my sloppy seconds," Avery said yesterday. The suspension is reportedly indefinite, pending a hearing with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Raptors Out in the Rockies



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Raptors' Jose Calderon guards Denver's Chauncey Billups in the first half last night in Denver. Jermaine O'Neal returned to the starting lineup for Toronto. For a complete game recap, visit www.metronews.ca/sports.

Rogers made city a player

But passing leaves question marks regarding Jays, NFL

The way Ted Rogers appreciated sports was very different from the love fans have for the team he owned and the events he sponsored. To him, the game wasn't in wins and losses as much as it was in improving community status and capitalizing on branding opportunities.

That outlook led an influential man of means with little personal interest in what happens on the field to buy the Toronto Blue Jays, pursue an NFL team and sponsor the country's ATP and WTA tennis stops. All were successfully incorporated into his media empire, bringing both civic pride and bottom-line benefit.

"Let's put it this way, he didn't know much about sports, but he knew a hell of a lot about the business of sports," said Phil Lind, vice-chairman of Rogers Communications Inc.

TORSTAR FILE PHOTO

Ted Rogers, left, teamed with Bills owner Ralph Wilson, centre, and Larry Tanenbaum, right, to bring eight Buffalo Bills games to Toronto over the next five years.

It's unclear if the looming succession at Rogers Communications might alter the company's outlook on ownership of the Blue Jays, or how efforts to bring the NFL to Toronto will be affected.

Lind insisted nothing will change on those fronts, and added that bringing the NFL to Toronto and buying the Blue Jays were both strong points of pride for Rogers.

"As a Canadian, he believed that we didn't play second fiddle to anyone, especially Americans. This was a very, very strong tenet with him," said Lind.

"He's looking at Toronto in the North American setting, he sees Toronto as sort of the fourth- or fifth-largest population centre and says, 'Why can't we have an NFL presence as well?'"

Rogers' death comes at a critical time for the Jays, who are trying to decide in which direction they go in future years.

Without Rogers' commitment to the club, there are also suggestions that new leadership at Rogers Communications could opt to sell. There would be few possible suitors for the team, particularly in these worrisome economic times, which could leave the Blue Jays in a similar position they were in back in 2000 when Rogers first bought them. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lakers stunned in Indiana

NBA Danny Granger scored 32 points and led the Indiana Pacers back from a 15-point fourth-quarter deficit, and Troy Murphy tipped in a missed shot at the buzzer to complete an improbable 118-117 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers last night. The Lakers came into the game with seven straight wins and the league's best record. But even another terrific night from Kobe Bryant, who scored 28 points and had seven rebounds, wasn't enough to fend off the Pacers. The loss is only L.A.'s second of the season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Layoffs make tough day all around for Jays

YorkReport

Marty York
marty.york@metronews.ca

It hit the Blue Jays' front office about as hard as a Roy Halladay fastball to the jaw. As first reported at metronews.ca after noon yesterday, Canada's MLB franchise laid off about 40 employees on what surviving members of the front office have labelled Black Tuesday.

"So much for happy holidays," a Blue Jays source lamented. "A big chunk of the sales staff has been laid off. It's a very, very, very sad day. A morbid day. We're seeing a lot of tears here (at the Rogers Centre). First, we came into the office to the news that our owner (Ted Rogers) just died. And then the layoffs. I guess this day will go down for the rest of time as Black Tuesday for the Jays."

A number of divisions within the Rogers corporation were affected by the downsizing. It's yet another lousy sign of the times. Devastating economy. Recession. Dismal exchange rate. Misery. Lost jobs.

The Jays are the first sports organization in Canada to demonstrate their troubles with massive layoffs.

Sources who know about these sorts of things told me no Canadian sports franchise in history has laid off as many employees in one day as the Jays did yesterday.

And brace yourself because, sadly, other clubs surely will follow suit.

"It's an awful feeling," one of the Jays' laid-off salesmen told me. "It's hard to believe that they can offer tens of millions of dollars to a pitcher like A.J. Burnett and yet get rid of all of us like this. Put all of us (laid-off employees) together and we wouldn't even make half of what Burnett would get for one year ... It's hard to take."

And, oh yes, the Jays also have cancelled their annual Christmas party.

- It should be a happier day Sunday at the Rogers Centre, where the NFL will play its first regular-season game on Canadian turf.

The Buffalo Bills and Miami Dolphins (including ex-Argonauts dud Ricky Williams) will meet, though Rogers Centre sources anticipate empty seats.

In recent weeks, Rogers reduced prices for some of the seats for the Bills-Dolphins tilt.

- Like Calgary Stampeders kicker Sandro DeAngelis, Hamilton Tiger-Cats kicker Nick Setta has drawn considerable attention from NFL sources. Setta, however, is strongly leaning toward re-signing with the Ticats for considerably less money than he could make if he cracked an NFL roster.

"In all honesty, I like Hamilton," Setta said. "I honestly want to stay."

Setta led the CFL in the past season with a punting average of 47.4 yards.

Ticket to Tampa

- Former York University football star Angelo Kioussis has partnered with the NFL to give Canadian fans the opportunity to experience the Super Bowl in Tampa Bay. NFL On Location provides accommodations, pre-game hospitality and game tickets. Visit www.thetravellerinc.com for details.

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Mason gets monthly nod
Columbus Blue Jackets goaltender Steve Mason was named NHL's rookie of the month for November yesterday after posting a 5-2-1 record with a .919 save percentage and two shutouts. METRO NEWS SERVICES

All business for Wilson

Ron Wilson has been hired and fired by enough hockey teams to render him immune to any silly, sentimental longings for an old home or a lost opportunity.

CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES
Ron Wilson coached the Sharks for 5 1/2 seasons.

Even if Wilson felt the tiniest bit bittersweet about the San Jose Sharks' outstanding start in their first season since his departure, he would never admit it to the likes of Jeremy Roenick or Joe Thornton.

The coach who led the Sharks to almost every major NHL achievement except the Stanley Cup finals returned to San Jose last night behind the Maple Leafs' bench.

Like any coach, Wilson admires the 20-3-1 powerhouse that has emerged in San Jose under new coach Todd McLellan, but he doesn't anticipate any excess pride or disappointment at the Shark Tank, which is likely to greet him warmly.

"I've been through this three or four times," Wilson said Monday after the Maple Leafs' morning skate prior to a 3-1 win over Los Angeles. "How many times have you been fired? If you haven't, you don't know what I'm talking about. Don't assume you know what I'm thinking. It's going to be fun to see them."

For a complete recap of last night's Leafs/Sharks game in San Jose, visit us online at metronews.ca/sports.

Wilson is the winningest coach in Sharks history, going 206-134-45 after taking over mid-season in December 2002.

Last season's club finished with the NHL's second-best regular season record, but flopped out of the second round of the playoffs for the third straight year. Although the Sharks had won more post-season series than all but two franchises over the previous four years, Doug Wilson replaced him with McLellan.

Wilson was surprised and disappointed by the firing, but he quickly landed a plum, high-paying job with rebuilding Toronto, even bringing along Sharks assistant coaches Tim Hunter and Rob Zettler — but not before the same decompression process he performed after losing previous jobs in Anaheim and Washington.

"They fired me, and I was on a red-eye and a golf course the next morning," said Wilson, who spends the off-season in South Carolina. "That's exactly what I did."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crosby gaining on all-Hab lineup

NHL Sidney Crosby is closing in on a trio of Montreal Canadiens in voting for the NHL all-star game. As of yesterday, Habs players continued to lead all six starting spots on the Eastern Conference team, with Crosby having made up the most ground since last week.

Alex Kovalev (393,303), Saku Koivu (390,026) and Alex Tanguay (385,297) were the top three forwards, followed by Crosby (320,373) and Penguins teammate Evgeni Malkin (264,914).

Officials point fingers in death

NHL Russian prosecutors have blamed an arena manager and a club director for negligence in the death of rising Russian star Alexei Cherepanov. Prosecutors said in a statement yesterday that the manager of the Moscow region arena where Cherepanov was playing failed to coordinate proper emergency medical services before the game. The 19-year-old Cherepanov collapsed and died during an October game.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Citi Field stays despite bailout

The New York Mets say the name Citi Field will remain on their new ballpark and believe the struggling bank will survive its current economic crisis following a government bailout. Citigroup is paying the Mets $400 million US over 20 years for naming rights to the stadium, scheduled to open next year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LaTouche, Gators look to upset St. Mike's in Metro Bowl

He's known around his school as the kid with the magic foot.

For Rashad LaTouche, kicking 40-yard field goals is no big deal.

In his final high school football game tonight, LaTouche will be a key part of the game plan for the Donald Wilson Gators as they face the two-time defending champion St. Michael's Kerry Blues in the 27th annual Metro Bowl championship at the Rogers Centre.

"In 20 years, I've never seen a more gifted high school field goal kicker than him," praised Gators head coach Adam Papadakos.

Also a fullback, linebacker and punter, the 5-foot-11, 225-pound LaTouche has scored 90 points in eight games. Almost half of his 12 field goals have come from 40 yards or longer.

"I like kicking on artificial turf and playing the Metro Bowl indoors should give me opportunities to help my team win," said LaTouche, who is hoping to play in the fall at either Laurier or McMaster or even get an NCAA scholarship.

Rashad LaTouche is a jack-of-all-trades player for Whitby's Donald Wilson.

LaTouche kicked a 53-yard field goal in practice and last September put one through from 44 yards in a pre-season 48-17 loss to Hoover High, a game played in Canton, Ohio.

But the Gators, whose school just opened five years ago, will need more than just LaTouche.

They will also have to figure out a way to stop the Kerry Blues — a team that's unbeaten in 10 games this year. Head to head, St. Mike's appear to have the edge in passing, receiving, running and maybe even special teams. Grade 11 quarterbacks Tyler Pritty and Richard Quittenton have shared the job for St. Mike's, combining for almost 2,000 yards in passing. Running backs Brendan Morgan, Giancarlo Scarpone and Cole Tudor have combined for 16 touchdowns.

Metro Bowl – Tonight

Donald Wilson (9-0-1) vs. St. Michael's (10-0)
8 p.m., Rogers Centre

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SCOREBOARD

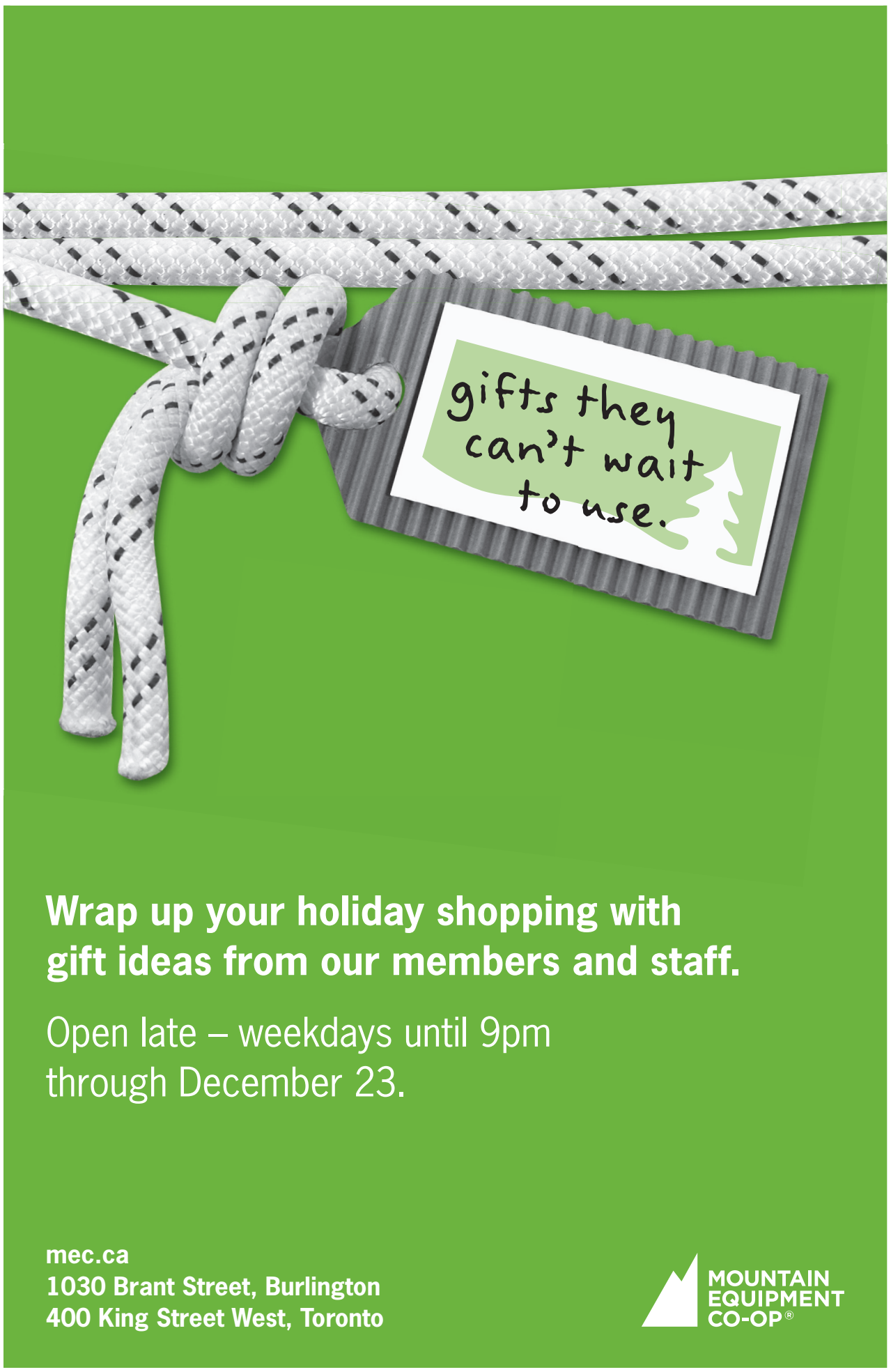
NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Florida 5 Washington 3
Philadelphia 4 Tampa Bay 3 (OT)
Montreal 5 Atlanta 4
Dallas at Calgary
Los Angeles at Phoenix
TORONTO at San Jose

TONIGHT'S GAMES
Atlanta at Ottawa
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Rangers
St. Louis at Minnesota
Anaheim at Chicago
Dallas at Edmonton

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Indiana 118 L.A. Lakers 117
Portland 104 New York 94
Washington 108 New Jersey 88
Detroit at San Antonio
Philadelphia at Chicago
L.A. Clippers at Dallas
TORONTO at Denver
Utah at Sacramento



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CIS postpones decision on Vanier venue
A slew of last-minute bids for the hosting rights to the 2009 Vanier Cup has prompted Canadian Interuniversity Sport to postpone a decision on who will get the football championship game. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Burress suspended

The New York Giants fined and suspended Plaxico Burress yesterday for four games — the rest of the regular season — after he accidentally shot himself in the right thigh over the weekend at a Manhattan nightclub.

Plaxico Burress, right, leaves a Manhattan police station Monday.

The team also placed him on the reserve non-football injury list, which means the wide receiver couldn't come back for playoffs, either.

The team punished Burress a day after he was charged with illegal weapons possession, which carries a penalty of 3½ to 15 years in prison. He is due back in court on March 31.

Burress arrived at Giants Stadium yesterday morning, and met individually with Giants president John Mara, general manager Jerry Reese and head coach Tom Coughlin. He left for a medical test and returned in the afternoon for another brief session with team officials.

"As we have said since Saturday morning, our concern is for Plaxico's health and well-being," Mara said. "This is an important time for him to take care of his body and heal up and also deal with the very serious legal consequences and other issues in his life. When I spoke with Plaxico he expressed great remorse for letting down his teammates."

Dr. Scott Rodeo, a team physician, examined Burress yesterday and told the Giants that the gunshot wound would have sidelined the 31-year-old player for four-to-six weeks.

This is the second time the Giants suspended Burress this season. He missed the Oct. 2 game against Seattle for missing a team meeting.

He also has been fined dozens of times since 2005 for violating team rules, and he was hit with a $45,000 US fine by the league for abusing an official and throwing a ball into the stands during a game.

"Our concern all along has been for Plaxico the person, not Plaxico the player," team chairman Steve Tisch said. "We are here to support him and his family as he recovers from his wound and deals with some serious issues."

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg spoke out again yesterday, saying he talked to Mara and NFL commissioner Roger Goodell. He told them the law says "you see something, you got to call the cops. That's the thing you should do."

Bloomberg also said the state should consider revoking the liquor licence of the nightclub, the Latin Quarter, for allowing Burress to enter with a gun.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Giant troubles

- New York Giants receiver Steve Smith was robbed at gunpoint at his New Jersey home on Nov. 25, police said. The robbery was first reported Sunday by NBC's Tiki Barber, a former Giants player. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jr. camp roster coming today

HOCKEY The team portrait of the next Canadian junior hockey team starts coming into focus with the announcement of the selection camp roster today in Ottawa. A pool of about 38 players was assembled by Hockey Canada head scout Al Murray. It's up to head coach Pat Quinn and his assistants to extract a gold-medal team from a five-day camp starting Dec. 11 in Ottawa. Canada is trying for a fifth consecutive gold medal at the world junior hockey championship, which would tie the country's record of five straight titles from 1992 to 1997.

Body of Martin found in lake

HOCKEY Quebec provincial police divers recovered the body yesterday of former NHL star Hubert (Pit) Martin, who drowned after the snowmobile he was riding on plunged into an icy lake near his home on Sunday. Martin was a four-time NHL all-star in the 1960s and '70s.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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5. Eliminate the cumbersome eligibility rules

The United Steelworkers Union is calling on the federal government to do the right thing and improve Employment Insurance (EI) benefits so families can make it through this economic crisis. Out of work shouldn't mean out of hope.

Governments will give billions to the companies who are letting people go. It's only fair that they also help the laid-off workers and their families who are the real victims.

$54.1 billion of your EI contributions have been siphoned out of the EI fund over the years and used for other purposes. Now is the time to pay that money back and put it to work. The average EI benefit of $317 a week is far below the poverty line and isn't enough to live on.

Any economic stimulus package has to include an expansion of EI. It's not only a matter of fairness to families, it's one of the fastest and most direct ways to boost the entire economy.

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Downward trend
Fewer tourists are flocking to the beaches of the Dominican Republic, the top Caribbean tourist destination in recent years. New statistics show visitor numbers declined in the second half of the year. Destinations including Bermuda and the Bahamas have also reported declines. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Travel

Vanishing point

Airports seem to have become black holes for business travellers' laptops: 12,000 laptops are lost at U.S. airports every week, and 70 per cent of those laptops — which good Samaritans and airport employees return to lost-and-found departments — are never reclaimed, according to the Ponemon Institute. ITBUSINESS.CA

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A closeup of the Pinnacles Desert

Photo tour lets you see this magical Australian landscape properly

ANDY PHILLIPS
for Metro Canada

Pinnacles bathe in sunset in the Pinnacles Desert, Nambung National Park, which is 250 kilometres north of Perth in Western Australia.

GEMMA PHILLIPS PHOTOS

Mike Newton, operator of Turquoise Coast Enviro Tours, with a bronze-winged pigeon in the Pinnacles Desert

"Stop right where you are," said Mike Newton, his head cocked toward the sandy ground beneath our feet. Without saying another word, he fell to his knees and thrust the tips of his fingers into a tiny ridge of sand branching out from a nearby plant.

He ran the edges of his fingers along the length of the ridge, as if trying to dig up whatever had caused them."I think it must have gone," he said, as he stood up and brushed himself off. He pulled a small photo album out of his back pocket and flipped it open to a picture of a squat, many-legged tan-coloured bug: A sandgroper.

"They call us Western Australians sandgropers," he said with a chuckle. "I haven't got a clue why."

It was late afternoon in the middle of Nambung National Park, several hours drive north of Perth, among a natural attraction better known as the Pinnacles Desert. All around us were irregular-shaped rock pillars, the result of a geological process from the time when millions of kilometres of what is now called the Turquoise Coast would have been underwater.

Mike, our guide, had explained the process with a diagram drawn in the sand. The simple version was that they were pillars of marine limestone slowly being uncovered by shifting sand dunes, creating a forest of stone statues.

The stares of tourists trundling round the self-drive track in their hire cars were firmly fixed on these forms, as they spread across the undulating carpet of sand around us.

Mike had attempted to draw our attention elsewhere. He had pointed out emu tracks which wandered between the rock columns, and locusts camouflaged against the sand.

Moments before spotting the ridges of a burrowing sandgroper, he had fixed his steely stare on a bronze-winged pigeon which had hopped across the sand track. The fact that it hadn't flown away meant that something was wrong, he said, and followed it into a bush. He came out with it in his hands, and examined its wings. He replaced it deep in the bush to protect it from predators and vowed to return to it later.

Yet revealing the subtle detail of the park's flora and fauna was only part of Mike's tour. It was a sunset photography tour, designed to not only show us the highlights of the Pinnacles Desert but enable us to capture them on camera.

His van doubled as a mobile camera shop; he carried spare batteries, universal chargers of several kind and even a gizmo which enabled him to download the contents of memory cards.

Mike's company, Turquoise Coast Enviro Tours, was the last one to offer tours from Cervantes, the small town 17 kilometres back along the road.

He'd convinced us to come up and spend the night in Cervantes rather than travel from Perth and back in a day, as so many of the other tours did. The bus ride from the city meant visitors often didn't get long enough to actually get out of their seat and explore the place, he said.

We had three hours among the pinnacles, enough time for several circuits of the track and several walks through the maze of stone pillars. Mike pointed out the pinnacles which resembled different things: A turtle, a church (complete with spire) and a peculiar rock which looked like a kangaroo from two opposite points.

After we'd taken all the photos we wanted, we piled back into the van for the last time and finished the last loop of the track.

Almost as an afterthought, Mike said the path through the pinnacles had already been changed several times as limestone peaks have appeared in the middle of what was the road.

He pointed out several tips of rock protruding up in the middle of the track we were currently driving on."There are a couple of places where if the sand blows away then vehicles won't be able to get through at all — so enjoy the ride while you can."

Pinnacles desert

- The sunset photography tour of the Pinnacles Desert is run by Turquoise Coast Enviro Tours and costs $55 AUS per adult or $30 per child (6-14 years). Morning tours are also available, starting at 8 a.m., while full day tours of other attractions are also available. Visit *thepinnacles.com.au*.
- Cervantes Lodge, a short distance from the beach at Thirsty Point in Cervantes, has double rooms with ocean views for $110 per couple per night; *cervanteslodge.com.au*.
- Virgin Blue operates daily flights to Perth from various airports within Australia. Visit *virginblue.com.au* for bookings.

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Now launching

Vietnam's first privately-owned airline has begun flights, aiming to tap rising demand for air travel in the fast-growing Southeast Asian nation. Indochina Airlines operates four daily flights between Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Montreal hopes for holiday tourists

Melchior, the old king of Arabia and Persia, is coming to Montreal in December. So is Babushka, the Russian grandmother with a heart of gold, and Black Peter, who left lumps of coal for naughty children on Christmas.

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

NORMAND RAJOTTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Above, Montreal's City Hall is lit up for the Christmas season in this file photo. Above right, Gérard Holstein as Santa Claus, Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet as Babushka, Frédéric Parent as Black Peter and Christian Arcand as St. Nicholas, all part of a Montreal tour this Christmas season.

Santa Claus is en route too — as well as lots of other people, the city's tourism board hopes.

With the economic meltdown gripping the world and dire news reports about the state of the global Christmas shopping season, Montreal remains undaunted and has plenty of activities for every size wallet, says Tourisme Montreal spokeswoman Marie Jose Pinsonnault.

"People might cut down but they'll still keep money for entertainment and recreation," she said. Pinsonnault said she expects that people from the New England states, for example, who frequently come to Montreal, will still pop in.

"It's still a good deal," she said, noting rooms can be had for $150 per night and travellers can take advantage of the "Sweet Deal" packages offered by Montreal hotels which gives them a second night at half price.

"I think everybody will be looking for some deals, which does not mean you're a cheap destination," she added. "It just means you want to go somewhere, you'll look into your expenses. But you'll still want to go."

Melchior, Babushka, Black Peter and Santa are all part of an exhibit at the Pointe-a-Calliere museum on Saturdays and Sundays in December and all week beginning Dec. 23 through Jan. 31, with the exception of Christmas Day.

Children will get the chance to meet the festive characters, who will be stationed along a path through the museum which focuses on archeology and history. "Each of them will have a 10-minute speech that they will make to the children and they'll describe how they celebrate Christmas in their part of the world," said Catherine Roberge, a spokeswoman for the museum.

Pinsonnault said Montreal is generally hopping during the Christmas season."There are so many activities that are offered — some free, some with a small entrance fee."

Christmas decorations have already started to brighten the city, and shops are unveiling eye-catching window displays, the most traditional being the Ogilvy's window on Ste-Catherine Street.

Tourists can also take a more organized look at Christmas decorations with tours organized by several Montreal companies. Montreal's famed St. Joseph's Oratory offers an exhibition of creches, giving visitors the chance to discover the many representations of the Nativity.

While there's plenty of year-round shopping in Montreal, the Salon des metiers d'art du Quebec running from Dec. 5 until Dec. 21 gives people a chance to maybe score a unique holiday gift.

Old Montreal, a favourite of tourists during the year because of its historic architecture, also comes alive with the Christmas spirit all through December with the Old Montreal Extravaganza. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

London's top Christmas shopping destination packs it all under one roof

EMMA E. FORREST
Metro World News

GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES

A view of the Westfield shopping centre's Christmas lights

Thanks to the rock-bottom value of the pound, London is an excellent prospect for Christmas shopping — especially now that there seem to be sales on all year round.

Experienced London shoppers will still want to make a pilgrimage to the Topshop megastore at Oxford Circus, but there's a new destination for visitors who are never quite sure where to find the coolest shops.

Located in Shepherds Bush, on the outskirts of Notting Hill, Westfield Shopping Centre is Europe's largest in-town retail and leisure destination. Westfield is every shopaholic's dream destination, open daily from 9 a.m. and 10 p.m., this vast shopping mall includes budget and designer fashion, homeware, department stores, toy shops and accessories stores. As well as mainstream brands including Apple, Topshop, Zara, Gap, Replay and Dior, there are also hip labels including Bench, Twenty8Twelve, Desigual and Zadig & Voltaire. Shop 'til you drop then recuperate in one of the 50 different international food concessions; *uk.westfield.com*.

It's not just the shops that are holding sales — many of London's restaurants are beating the recession by offering bargains, including trendy dim sum chain, Ping Pong, which is selling Mercier champagne for £14 a bottle — cheaper than its retail price — until the New Year; *pingpongdimsum.com*.

There are some exciting new restaurants to check out too. For those travelling on the Eurostar, there's the elegant new St. Pancras Grand brasserie that's opened up alongside the 95-metre champagne bar, and Flash, an ultra-hip temporary "guerrilla" restaurant has been set up at the Royal Academy of Arts for the winter season. Part of the GSK Contemporary season, check out the 20 art exhibitions then join the buzz of bankers, tailors and fashionistas as they lunch on Dorset crab and fish tacos at this exhibition within an exhibition, *bookflashnow.com*.

Looking for a wallet-friendly place to stay? Take advantage of the amazing weekend-only offer from London's coolest hotel, Andaz. To celebrate their new 1901 restaurant, they're offering a welcome drink, dinner for two with wine, breakfast in bed and a double room for just £190.1. (Until January, *london.liverpoolstreet.andaz.com*).

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Visit **DisneyGiftCard.com** for more information about the Disney Gift Card program.

CST# 1022229-50; NVST# 2006-0198 ©Disney C8502974

Bike sharing to launch June 1 on Oahu

Come June 1, Oahu travellers could hop on a bike and explore the island on two wheels, as part of a new pilot project, Momentum B-cycle, that allows people to check out and drop off the bikes at central island locations for a small fee. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Venice **City under water**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/LUIGI CONSTANTINI

People walk in Venice's St. Mark's Square yesterday as three-foot tidal surges from the Adriatic Sea flooded the lagoon city.

Rock and Roll Museum a hit

The**Travel**Junkie

Julia Dimon

thetraveljunkie.ca

Rock enthusiasts, break out your air guitars and head to NYC. Opening in the Big Apple this week, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Annex, will take visitors "beyond the typical museum experience" to honour "the most defining moments in rock history."

Nestled among Soho's boutiques, the Annex is a 250,000 square foot building stocked with music memorabilia. It's not as comprehensive as her sister museum in Cleveland, Ohio, but Annex does have a wide selection of rock relics, including: An Elvis "peacock" jump suit, handwritten letters from Paul Simon to Art Garfunkel, Bruce Springsteen's 1957 yellow Chevy, and John Lennon's piano heard in the 1970's hit Imagine.

Madonna's infamous Jean Paul Gaultier gold bustier.

A visit to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Annex starts in the theatre, a gallery designed to look like a concert venue. Seated among the bar stools, museum-goers watch a toe-tapping, ten-minute music montage. Iconic stars, everyone from Aretha Franklin to U2, sing their hearts out to a crowd of screaming virtual fans. With surround sound, flashing stage lights and video projections, the theatre experience makes you feel like part of the concert.

In the next gallery, wireless audio devices, an iPod-like box complete with headphones, are handed out. Press play and the music automatically syncs up with the memorabilia you're looking at.

While standing in front of Johnny Cash's 1985 black leather boots, the audio guide blasts a fiery tune from the Man in Black. Moving towards Madonna's gold bustier, designed by Jean Paul Gaultier for her Blonde Ambition tour, the country music fades and transitions to the Material Girl's hit Express Yourself.

Since the museum and the technology are new, there are still a few glitches to be worked out. If you move around the room too quickly, the technology struggles to keep up. Scrambling songs from different artists, my audio guide played Bruce Springsteen when I was near the Grandmaster Flash exhibit and faded to Elvis Priestly when I was near the Buddy Holly's acoustic guitar. Despite these tiny inconveniences (which engineers are working to fix), the technology is pretty impressive, giving a new, interactive dimension to traditional museum-going.

No matter your musical taste, New York's new Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is sure to have some unique piece of memorabilia that will awaken your rebellious inner rock star and take it on a nostalgic journey.

Visit *rockannex.com* for more information.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of thetraveljunkie.ca.

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Automotive

A METRO JOINT VENTURE WITH: carguide magazine.com

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Honda Fits like a glove

Revised subcompact still class leader for fun

When you're a hit, life's easy. And Honda's Fit has definitely been a hit in Canada, continually selling out its yearly allotment with ease. Beyond just being a spacious and fuel-efficient hatchback, the Fit's fun-to-drive character is what keeps customers coming back for more.

Less than three years into Fit's stay in Canada, Honda has significantly revised it for 2009.

During the Canadian press launch in Montreal, Honda executives took great pains to ensure that journalists understood that the company was pitching the new Fit at young, single, urban, active, environmentally-conscious customers. They even held the technical briefing in Canadian DJ Max Graham's über-hip loft in historic Vieux-Montreal. However, when pressed on who actually bought the original Fit, much like Honda's Element SUV, the spectrum was much broader — and older.

Fit version-2.0 gets the usual size inflation to make it more palatable for, ahem, larger passengers. Length and width are up by a huge 4,110 mm and 1,695 mm respectively to help create a more livable cabin and increased cargo capacity, while the wheelbase and track stretch 2,500 mm and 1,475 mm, making for a more confident ride on the highway.

Honda's styling department didn't have to work that hard at updating the Fit's sheet metal. Throw a crease here, add a character line there … It's a very familiar shape, and can easily be mistaken for the older version.

The added length has thrown the Fit's cute styling proportions a bit out of whack up front. While the new version is more angular and sharper than the egg-like original, there's a reason why you won't see many side-on photographs. For whatever reason — call it having to meet old Canadian bumper regulations, North American "tastes", etc. — our Fit gets a more prominent proboscis that's none too flattering. European and Japanese-market Jazz' are much tidier.

The Fit's mechanicals stay very familiar, meaning an innovative floorpan that keeps the fuel tank under the front seats. Suspension remains MacPherson struts up front with a torsion-beam out back, but the geometry has been altered to provide better handling.

Wheel and tire sizes go up in '09 as well with base DX models getting 15-inch steelies with plastic hubcaps, while LX models get the same 15-inch alloys found on the Civic Hybrid. Fit Sports exclusively get 16-inch alloy wheels.

The 1.5-litre 16-valve SOHC four-cylinder now gains i-VTEC, which increases horsepower to 117 at 6,600 rpm.

Transmissions remain five-speed units: A manual is standard on all trim levels, with the automatic options. However, the neat steering-wheel-mounted shift paddles packaged with the auto trans are gone for '09.

Fuel economy remains strong with the manual scoring 7.2/5.7 L/100 km city/highway. Strangely, for those looking for the ultimately frugal Honda, the automatic Fit actually takes the cake with a 7.1/5.5 L/100 km rating.

Inside, the Fit's calling card is its flexibility thanks to the 60/40 split-folding Magic Seat, which now folds down flat in one motion thanks to new integrated rear headrests, and a class-leading 585 litres of cargo volume.

Unlike other recent Honda redesigns that have left us wanting, the new Fit perfectly fills its duty of a fun-to-drive runabout.

CARGUIDE STAFF

2009 Honda Fit

Type: Subcompact
Price: $14,980 - $19,280
Engine: I-4, SOHC, 1.5L
HP: 117 @ 6,600 rpm

Highlights

- Fun to drive
- Affordable
- Fuel-efficient

Less than three years into Fit's stay in Canada, Honda has significantly revised it for 2009.

Inside, the Fit's calling card is its flexibility thanks to the 60/40 split-folding Magic Seat.

Make Christmas a black and white one for Lamborghini lovers on your list with the range of specialty items.

Christmas gifts for the fast and the furious

If celebrating Christmas "fast" is your style, then Lamborghini's range of 2008 baubles, bears, candles and cushions are now available, in the special matte black and white colours launched this year on its new 202-mph Lamborghini Gallardo LP 560-4.

The box set of three baubles in lightweight ceramic is available with one Nero Noctis black and two Mono Cerus white in each box: Both colours are available to order on the Gallardo LP 560-4.

Box sets of one black, one white, slow-burning candles are offered, and the 13-inch Lamborghini shield-embroidered cushions in the two colours complete the collection.

When it's time to slow Christmas down, or for younger Lamborghini fans at Christmas, cuddle up to the Lamborghini polar bear, which sports a black sweater and the Lamborghini logo.

In addition to the celebratory black and white Christmas selection, Lamborghini has a range of calendars and Christmas cards available to order, as well as the complete Collezione Automobili Lamborghini, which ranges from pencils and pens, to shirts, sweatshirts and caps to exclusive luggage.

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Best car deals in tough times

Today's tough economy has millions of consumers seeking ways to spend less and save more.

When it comes to selecting a car, be flexible. Research a variety of makes and models ... to find comparably equipped cars at more affordable prices.

If you're in the market for a car but stressed about your wallet here are some important tips to help you stretch your car-buying dollar.

Deals abound, so do your homework.

Because car dealers are now moving inventory to make room for 2009 vehicles, pay attention to local dealer websites, newspapers and circulars for price cuts and special promotions on 2008 makes and models they must clear off their lots.

If you need car financing, be sure to check a variety of lenders, such as your local credit union, to find rates and loan terms that work best for you.

If you finance through the car dealer, check your credit score online and bring this information with you to the dealership to help determine the types of financing programs you qualify for.

Finally, making a larger down payment could help you qualify for financing programs for which you may not have initially qualified, reducing your monthly car payment expenses in the process.

When it comes to selecting a car, be flexible. Research a variety of makes and models in the same or similar class to find comparably equipped cars at more affordable prices.

You may find a second, third or even fourth choice that costs less, without sacrificing the quality and features you really want.

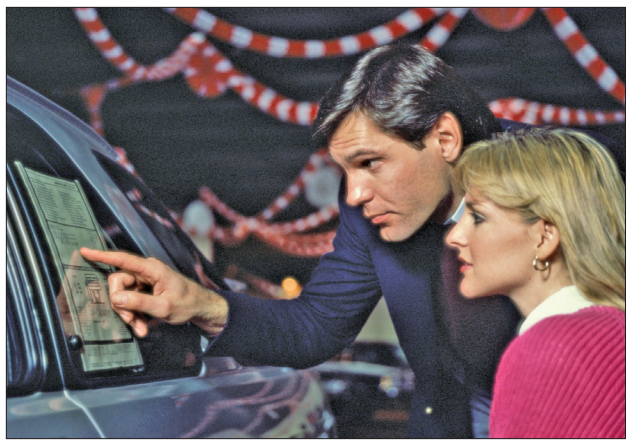
The minute you drive a new car off the lot, it depreciates in value, so consider buying a used car.

Not only will you avoid hefty depreciation costs from the get-go, there's a good chance you'll find a great used car in excellent condition for less money than a new car.

If buying a used car scares you, check into certified pre-owned vehicles (CPO), which have gone through rigorous inspections and come with solid warranties for added peace of mind.

If you're trading in your existing car, research its trade-in prices and be honest with yourself and the dealer about its condition.

Give the car a good detailing and repair any minor damage prior to visiting the dealership. If you financed the car, know how much you owe on your existing loan. Owing more than it's worth will obviously offset any discounts being offered on your new car, but on the other hand, those new car discounts might enable you to pay off your existing loan.



If you're in the market for a car but stressed about your wallet, there are many ways you can stretch your car-buying dollar.

Icons Wienermobile meets blimp

Two famous American icons, the Goodyear blimp, which began operating in 1925, and the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile, which first shifted into gear in 1936, met for the first time recently at the blimp's home base hangar in Suffield, Ohio. The Wienermobile and the blimp both travel the country displaying their respective companies' brand logo while routinely supporting a variety of philanthropic organizations.

VW unveils performance concept

Powerful performance meets luxury in the Super CC performance concept Volkswagen unveiled at the 2008 SEMA show in Las Vegas.

The Performance CC brings a sleek exterior treatment highlighted by black chrome exterior accents, grey pearl paint with custom front and rear bumper, side panels and machined aluminum spoiler.

The black treatment continues inside with high-gloss piano black accents offset by matte black graphics. Customer black leather Recaro seats and matching floor mats are highlighted with white piping.

Design

- The Performance CC was designed by the Volkswagen Design Center in California with assistance from APR, LLC (www.goapr.com), Recaro, H&R Suspension and Brembo North America.

While the Performance CC looks striking, the upgrades will get hearts racing, the 2.0-litre TSI engine has been upgraded with an APR stage 3 turbocharger system with three performance levels.

In Full Power mode the Performance CC brings 311 hp and 313 lb/ft torque; GT mode offers 252 hp and 268 lb/ft of torque; and in the Eco mode 222 hp and 236 lb/ft of torque.

Key fact to take note of is that in the Eco performance mode, horsepower went up, as well as fuel economy. A production 2.0T CC automatic gets 28 hwy/19 city and our CC in Eco mode gets 33 hwy, 27 city.

The Performance CC sits on custom designed 10-spoke, 20-inch wheels and high performance 245/30 R20 Yokahama tires with an H&R street coil over sport suspension kit.

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#Limited time lease offers based on new 2009 Honda models. Lease example based on new 2009 Civic Sedan DX, model FA1529EX available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. £1.9% lease APR for 48 months. Monthly payment is $178.00 with $2,349.45 down payment or equivalent trade, $1,310 freight and PDI, first monthly payment and $0 security deposit due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is $12,286.10. Taxes, license, insurance and registration are extra. 96,000 kilometre allowance; charge of $0.12/km for excess kilometres. Retailer may lease for less. Retailer order / trade may be necessary. †Limited time financing offers based on new 2009 Honda models. Finance example based on new 2009 Civic Sedan DX, model FA1529EX available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. ‡MSRP is $16,990, plus $1,310 freight and PDI, financed at 1.9% APR equals $523.36 per month for 36 months. Cost of borrowing is $540.98 for a total obligation of $18,840.98. Taxes, license, insurance and registration are extra. Retailer may sell for less. Retailer order / trade may be necessary. ‡MSRP is $14,980 for a new 2009 Fit DX, model GE8729E. $1,310 freight and PDI, license, insurance, registration and taxes are extra. MSRP of Fit Sport model shown, model GE8789E is $19,280 plus $1,310 freight and PDI. *No payments for 90 days offer applies to purchase finance offers on new 2008 and 2009 Honda models purchased and delivered by January 2nd, 2009. Offer available only through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. Monthly payments are deferred for 90 days. Contracts will be extended accordingly. Interest charge (if any) will not accrue during the first 60 days of the contract. After the 60 days, interest (if any) starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay principal and interest (if any) monthly over the term of the contract. Retailer may sell for less. Retailer order / trade may be necessary. #/£/†*Offers valid from November 21st, 2008 through January 2nd, 2009 at participating Honda retailers. Offers subject to change or cancellation without notice. See your Honda retailer for full details.

Ultimate coupes

The A5 has a long hood thanks to its longitudinally mounted engine for a very sporting, classic coupe look.

JIM ROBINSON
for Metro Canada

VERONA, Italy — The 2008 Audi A5 and S5 coupes are at once making a statement about where the company is heading in the future while making a direct connection to its past.

The A5 and S5 are built on a new modular platform that sets the stage for the next generation A4 and many new models to come.

And while it would be easy to say the A5/S5 fits between the A4 and A6, it isn't really that simple.

Coupes appeal to the emotions much more than sedans and Audi hasn't had a coupe in the lineup in 10 years since the wedge-shaped quattro was sweeping all before it in the World Rally Championship. The road-going versions of those cars are still highly prized.

Audi A5/S5

Type: Coupe
Price: $49,475-$70,390
Engine: V6-V8
HP: 265-354

Highlights

- Flowing design
- Luxurious interior
- 0-100 km/h in 6 seconds

Coupes are also about image and Audis are nothing if not image, so the coupe was a gap long in need of filling.

At the same time, the 2008 A5 and S5 follow on the heels of the mid-engine, V8 R8 sportscar that was a breakthrough model for Audi in many ways.

The design language of the coupes has a distinct vibrancy about it. Like the R8, the coupes have almost liquid flowing lines with a prominent creased beltline wafting back from the now signature Audi grille. That line runs just below the windows creating taut flanks and allow for generous cutouts for the 17-inch wheels on the A5 and the 19-inchers on the S5.

With the engine set longitudinally instead of transversely, the short snout but long hood with bevelled front fenders gives the car a look of purpose when viewed from the front.

While there is far more room inside, especially in the back seating area than a BMW 3-Series, the upsweep of the beltline over the rear fenders and the tail (that almost disappears such is the shortness of the overhang) gives the impression this car is already moving though it is standing still.

In Canada we will get one version of the A5 and one of the S5, both with quattro drive and a six-speed, close ration manual transmission. We may or may not get the diesel, but not before 2009.

Like the A4/S4 and the A6/S6, the new coupes are primarily differentiated by engine.

The A5 gets a 3.2-litre, DOHC V6 with 265 hp and 247 lb/ft of torque, slightly more than the current A4 with the same engine. The S5 has the throaty 4.2-litre DOHC V8 as found in the S4, but this time with 354 hp and 325 lb/ft of torque.

The A5 scoots from 0-100 km/h in 6.1 seconds while the S5 cuts that time by a full second going from 0-100 km/h in 5.1 seconds.

PHOTOS BY JIM ROBINSON

The 2008 Audi S5 makes a statement from any angle, but most effectively from the front with the bold, signature grille and bevelled character line over the front fenders.

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LOWER DON LANDS INFRASTRUCTURE MUNICIPAL CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND KEATING PRECINCT PLAN PUBLIC FORUM #2

Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission are developing a plan to revitalize the Lower Don Lands and create a vibrant, mixed use, sustainable community that embraces and respects a newly naturalized and flood-protected mouth of the Don River.

The revitalization plan will include proposals for new neighbourhoods, community facilities and public spaces, as well as a Master Plan for transportation (including transit), water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. This study is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Municipal Class Environmental Assessment 2000*, as amended in 2007 (Phases 1 and 2).

The Lower Don Lands study area is generally bounded by the Don rail yard and Gardiner Expressway on the north, the Parliament Street slip on the west, the Ship Channel on the south and Don Roadway on the east.

Your ideas will help us plan the future of the Lower Don Lands. We invite you to attend the second Public Forum for this project:

Date: **Wednesday, December 10, 2008**
Location: **St. Lawrence Hall, 157 King Street East, Great Hall**
Time: **6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (Open House)**
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Buckle up the proper way

Thousands of Canadians die every year in motor vehicle collisions because of failure to use or install safety equipment properly. Follow these tips from Transport Canada for a safer ride for you and your family.

Knowing the right way to install child restraints is extremely crucial in protecting your kids.

SEATBELTS

• Buckle your seatbelt, making sure the latch clicks firmly into place.

Adjust the lap belt so it fits snugly across your hips and make sure the shoulder belt fits snugly across your chest and over your shoulder.

• Never wear your shoulder belt under your arm. In a collision, your upper body will pivot forward and your head will strike the vehicle interior. The belt will press into your abdomen and likely cause serious or even fatal injuries to internal organs.

• If you're pregnant, take extra care when adjusting your seatbelt. Sit as upright as you can, and wear the lap belt under your abdomen and as low over the hips as possible.

• Bulky winter clothing or large body types can pose a particular risk. Always try to place the lap belt below the bottom edge or fold of a winter jacket or below the lowest part of your belly so that it sits closer to the lap than to the belly button.

AIRBAGS

• Airbags cushion the head as it moves forward or sideways after impact. However, they expand with explosive speed and open faster than the blink of an eye. As a result, a deploying airbag can cause injuries if you are not properly positioned or restrained.

• While most of these injuries consist of minor bruises and abrasions, some can be serious or even fatal. Reduce the chances of injury by wearing a properly adjusted seatbelt, adjusting the vehicle's front seat as far back as possible to give the airbags room to inflate. The distance between the centre of your chest and the steering wheel should be at least 25 centimetres.

• If your vehicle has airbags, especially side airbags or curtains in the rear, keep the space between you and the airbag clear so objects aren't pushed towards you when the airbag inflates.

CHILD RESTRAINTS

• Children are protected by seats specifically designed for them.

There are four stages to properly protect children, according to the child's weight and height — rear-facing infant seats, forward-facing child seats, booster seats, and seat belts.

• Avoid the dangers of a front airbag by always placing children, 12 or younger, in the rear seat in properly secured child restraints.

• Keep kids a safe distance from side airbags. Children who are leaning against a side airbag when it inflates are at risk of serious injury.

• Don't let toys, blankets or other objects get between your child and an airbag.

You can find more information and downloads about road safety at www.tc.gc.ca/hookedonroadsafety/awareness.htm.

NEWS CANADA

In brief

CAMARO GM of Canada is now taking orders for the 2010 Camaro Coupe. Orders can be placed through a Chevrolet dealer who will have information regarding early ordering, vehicle packaging and specifications. This information is also available online at www.camaro.gm.ca. Canadian pricing for the 2010 Camaro will be released in the following weeks.

GOING ELECTRIC MINI will trial their electric Cooper by leasing 500 cars in California, New York and New Jersey. Despite the $850/month fee, more than 9,500 people have already signed up for the scheme.

NETWORK Nissan-Renault is to build a nationwide electric car-recharging network in Portugal beginning in 2010. Next up are France, Israel and Denmark.

PULLOUT More gloomy U.S. car industry news — Mitsubishi, Suzuki, Ferrari, Land Rover, Rolls-Royce and Nissan/Infiniti have bailed on the annual Detroit auto show.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Read a review of the MINI Clubman at metronews.ca/auto

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Carleton encourages prospects to 'question everything'
Carleton University's recruitment microsite invites prospective students to "challenge conventional thinking." A video on the portal lists questions like "should we engineer what we eat?" and "who controls the media?" "The Big Answers" provides descriptions of programs in which students would explore such questions and beyond. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

Centennial College

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Hope lies within IT and health

Economic downturn or not, there are jobs out there

Job Trends

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

With over 50,000 jobs recently slashed at America's biggest bank and the automotive industry spiralling ever deeper into debt, it's hard not to worry about employment, or the lack thereof.

But career services experts in Canada say there are still jobs to be had for those with the right skills and the country's employment situation isn't as bad as the headlines might suggest.

The massive job cuts, says the president of Workopolis.ca, are happening in the United States and have yet to reach Canada.

"In the U.S. we're seeing extremely high unemployment rates: Between 6 and 6.5 per cent which is really, really high for the U.S.," said Pat Sullivan, president of Workopolis.

"In Canada, we're at 20-year lows for unemployment and it's important to keep that in perspective."

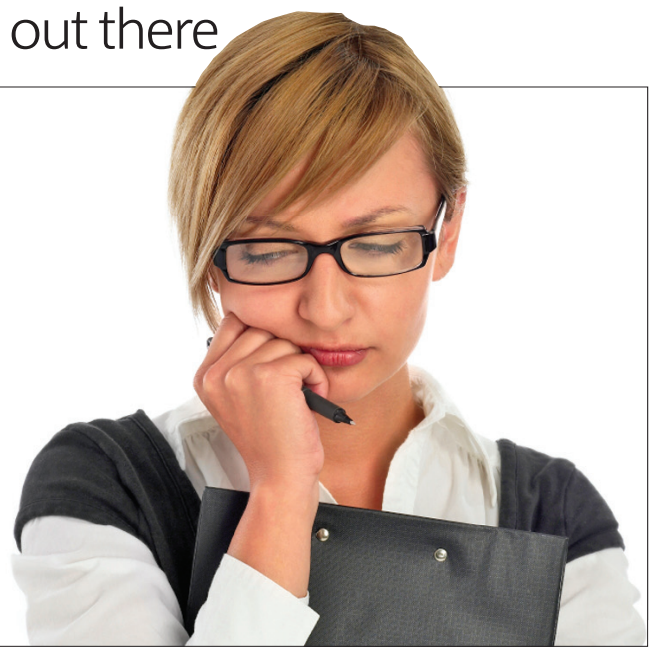
Statistics Canada reported an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent in October while the rate at the same time last year was 5.8 per cent. In October, 1999, the unemployment rate in the country was 7.2 per cent.

While it's important to keep things in perspective, Sullivan said, with the stock market as volatile as it's been it's also important to remain cautious and many Canadian companies are doing just that through hiring freezes and cutting down on capital costs.

But economic downturn or not, there are sectors that continue to thrive and search out new hires.

"In some areas like technology, we're still seeing great demand; in areas like health care we're seeing great demand," Sullivan said.

"In Canada, we're at 20-year lows for unemployment and it's important to keep that in perspective."
Workopolis president Pat Sullivan



If you're worried about the economic downturn remember that there are sectors that still continues to thrive.

In addition, employees with accounting skills are in high demand, says Greg McKeown, director at People Source, an employment solutions company in Toronto.

"When we are going through some of these uncertain times, it's even more imperative, for example, that companies have top notch accountants driving the business," he said.

Companies have to watch their money more closely, monitor their budgets better, cut costs and improve on financial analysis, he said.

There continues to be jobs in Information Technology (IT) said McKeown and Sullivan, but many companies are now looking for employees with more specified skills such as .NET and systems management.

Whatever the sector, most notable is the demand for highly skilled workers said a representative from Kelly Services Canada. The employment solutions company has been overwhelmed with requests for employees with engineering, finance or science skills.

Finally, if all else fails, try McDonald's, says the marketing coordinator for TorontoJobs.ca

The king of fast food reported a 5- to 11-per-cent increase in revenues in the last quarter while the rest of the hospitality industry is facing all-time lows.

"(It's the result of) people not being able to afford to go out to a sit-down kind of meal," said Rachel Burns.

The result is a surge in postings for fast food and grocery store clerks, she said.

Another option

• Also in line with an economic crisis, TorontoJobs.ca reports an increase in want ads from collections agencies or accounts receivable departments; with tightening budgets everywhere you turn, some companies need more hands on deck to track down their money.

More women in pharmacy and medicine field: Study

It's no surprise that women dominate health-care occupations in Canada, but a new study attaches some numbers to the situation.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information says women make up about 80 per cent of the health-care workforce.

Women continue to dominate in nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, and their ranks are increasing in male-dominated health-care professions.

Last year, the institute says 56 per cent of family doctors under age 40 were women, while in the 60-and-over group, only 15 per cent of family doctors were women.

And 64 per cent of pharmacists under 40 last year were women.

Francine Anne Roy, director of health resources information at the institute, says it's important to understand the workforce to plan for the future of health care in Canada.

Another institute manager, Deborah Cohen, says female occupational therapists and physiotherapists work fewer hours in their 30s and 40s compared to men, so it's important to recognize this for planning purposes.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Second Career options at Seneca

CLARIFICATION Seneca is hosting a Second Career Information Fair tomorrow, Dec. 4, at the Newnham Campus, Senecentre, 1750 Finch Ave. E, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Incorrect information appeared in Monday's Metro.

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Economic downturn spells trouble for niche U.S. institutions

According to a new survey from Massachusetts-based Carnegie Communications, the economic turmoil in the U.S. could hurt niche colleges — women's, historically black, and Catholic — in competing for applicants. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Work contracts are negotiable

WorkplaceLaw

Daniel Lublin

dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com

Most new employees are reluctant to bargain over terms of a contract, in fear it will be withdrawn. These fears are generally unfounded.

Employees routinely sign contracts replete with unfavourable terms: contracts can give employers the right to eliminate employees with minimum notice, banish them to far away jurisdictions, slash salaries or demote — with impunity, prevent competition following their departure, and break promises or representations at their pleasure.

Most new employees are reluctant to bargain over terms for fear that the contract will be withdrawn. These fears are generally unfounded. While the employer has the right to withdraw its offer, this typically occurs only if a reference or credit check proves unfavourable — not because the employee sought to amend any one-sided terms.

In spite of inequitable contracts, employees continue to sign their names. But before doing so, they should, at least, consider the following advice:

Once a contract has been signed and the job has commenced, it is generally too late to negotiate. Unless the contract requires or implies it, employers have no obligation to raise salaries, pay bonuses, provide profit sharing or stock options, or increase vacation time. They must only comply, in good faith, with the bargain that was made. If there is something worth negotiating for, get it in writing before signing the deal.

Where ancillary documents such as policies or manuals are referred to in the contract itself, obtain and read copies prior to agreeing to the contract. Employers rely on these documents and expect their employees to be familiar with their terms — even those that are adverse.

For non-executive level employees, express language surrounding termination is usually punitive. In these "termination clauses" employees agree to displace the right to receive reasonable severance and take a lesser amount instead. If most people understood how this language would affect them upon termination, very few would be agreeable to these terms.

Where pre-employment promises, guarantees or representations are made, commit them to writing. Employees have the onus to demonstrate that such promises were clearly made and that they relied on them in agreeing to the contract.

If the contract was signed under objectionable circumstances, it may be struck down. Despite having this discretion, courts will rarely exercise it in the employee's favour. In a recent column, I detailed the case of Patrick Barr, who claimed he was essentially forced into signing a broad-ranging release substantially reducing his otherwise hefty entitlement to severance pay. The court found the deal was unfortunate and less than Barr was entitled to, but ruled against him, as duress and coercion are not easily proven. Fair or not, seldom will a signed document be set aside.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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SFU professor to lead HIV/AIDS research network
Simon Fraser University professor Robert Hogg will head the Canadian Observational Cohort, a network of 31 HIV/AIDS clinicians and researchers in B.C., Ontario, and Quebec to study the effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy across the nation. METRO NEWS SERVICES

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Steering youth in the right direction

Youth mentor Kwesi Johnson plays to a tough crowd: Kids from Toronto's under-serviced and dangerous neighbourhoods, no strangers to gangs and drugs.

Whether he's coaching basketball, working as a camp counsellor, helping with their homework or just talking to them, Johnson's message is constant: Respect yourself, respect others.

Having grown up in a rough neighbourhood himself, Johnson has street cred when he talks to youth.

"In Grade 10, if I'd wanted to buy a gun, I knew how to get one. If I wanted to sell drugs — even easier. I knew who had it, who would buy it and for how much." When a friend was shot to death after answering his door, Johnson was deeply affected.

"When you see someone in a coffin like that, it really affects you ... The only thing I fear about death is that it might catch me off guard and I won't have helped enough people."

A recent graduate of Centennial College's Child and Youth Worker program, Johnson volunteers for a long list of agencies, including Malvern Family Resource Centre, the Anglican Church of the Nativity, Ryerson University's Tri Mentoring Program, the Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organization and the Black Communities and Police Consultative Committee.

The 23-year-old says he's motivated by the potential for changing lives.

"I tell them, 'Look at the alternatives. You have the choice not to take the easy route,'" he says. "For so many of these kids, it's easy, easy to get into fights and selling drugs."

Johnson grins as he shows off a hand-written letter he received from children in the Anglican Church of the Nativity's summer camp the year he was director. It shows a smiling stick-figure Johnson in a baseball cap, and thanks him being such a fun director, telling great jokes and taking them to fun places.

The potential for changing lives motivates 23-year-old Kwesi Johnson.

"It's what I'm all about: Connecting with youth and allowing them to have experiences they would like to have. They're the next generation. They're so impressionable, but they will teach you, too — a lot about yourself and a lot about them."

Johnson is adamant his teachers at Centennial, and the opportunities they provided, helped shape his path and instil him with a passion for education, despite his dyslexia.

"The professors at Centennial were so engaging. They all have experience in the field and are willing to share that experience as part of our learning," he says.

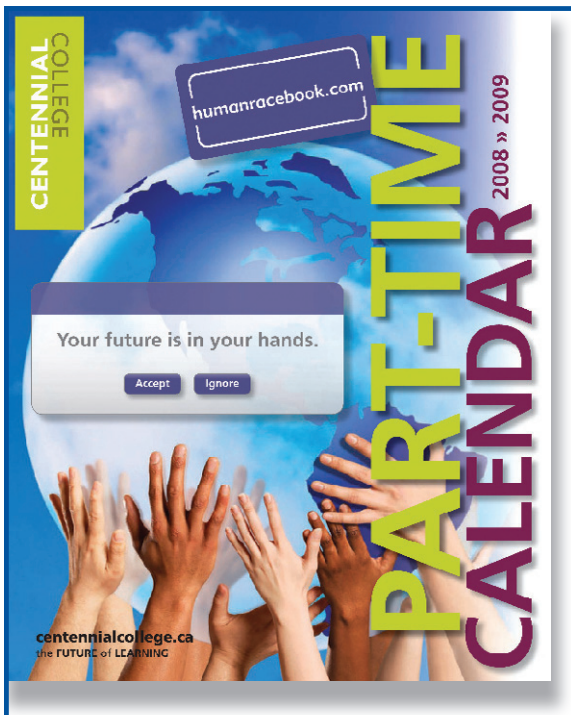
Johnson says it could be years before he knows whether his message of respect got through to his young clients. Still, he was encouraged to recently hear from a young man he met at an anti-bullying school talk.

The youth had read in the paper that Johnson was one of three people awarded the 2007 Lincoln Alexander Award for Leadership in Eliminating Racial Discrimination. He told Johnson how impressed he was with his work and that he was now attending York University.

Johnson doesn't speculate on whether he influenced the young man to continue in school. Simply knowing he didn't take the easy route is enough.

For details about Centennial College's Child and Youth Worker program, visit centennialcollege.ca/childandyouthworker.

–SHARON OOSTHOEK



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Essence reveals most influential list
Actor Will Smith, moviemaker Tyler Perry and singer/actress Queen Latifah have joined U.S. president elect Barack Obama on Essence magazine's coveted Most Influential African-Americans list. The quartet is joined by rapper Kanye West and hip-hop icons Wyclef Jean and will.i.am. IMDB.COM

Entertainment

Blanchett's star
Actress Cate Blanchett is to be honoured with the 2,376th star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. She will unveil her star in front of the Egyptian Theatre on Friday.
IMDB.COM

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Turning Sunset Strip into Broadway

Movie adaptations of hit plays sometimes struggle to jump those cultural divides

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

William Shakespeare has been jokingly called the most prolific screenwriter in Hollywood. At no time is that perhaps more befitting than right now.

With upcoming movie adaptations of such plays as Frost/Nixon and the Pulitzer Prize-winning Doubt, it seems Hollywood is looking evermore toward the stage for the sake of the big-screen.

"There's some great stuff out there in theatre," said filmmaker Darren Lynn Bousman who directed Repo! The Genetic Opera on stage before recently adapting it for the cinema. "Even in Los Angeles, these little black box theatres have incredible things that, in my mind, are better than a lot of movies out there."

Perhaps no one knows this better than Luke Brown. As associate artistic director of Halifax's Neptune Theatre, he has just staged a successful run of Frost/Nixon and will be presenting Doubt in March.

"When we chose the show, we weren't even aware of the film," said Brown, admitting that cinematic counterparts aren't always advantageous from a marketing perspective, as they discovered staging The Producers last year.

"The film wasn't really well received and I think that may have hurt some people's view of going to see it (as a play)."

While musical-adaptations generally perform better on film, plays like Frost/Nixon continue to struggle jumping the cinematic synapse: Mamma Mia! earned an estimated $143 million in multiplexes, but the Tony Award-winning play-turned-movie History Boys only wrangled $2.7 million.

Conversely, more successful has been reworking film for theatre. With Dirty Dancing, The Color Purple, Young Frankenstein and even Shrek being adapted for the stage, the lights of Broadway could easily be mistaken for the billboards on Sunset Strip.

"If people are lying down $50 for something, they want to lay down $50 for something they're familiar with," said Brown about the trend. "Something that they haven't heard of, people may be a little more hesitant to throw down money on."

Frank Langella, left, plays Richard Nixon while Michael Sheen plays journalist David Frost in the screen adaptation of the play Frost/Nixon, in theatres this month.

Surprisingly, as a theatre person, Brown isn't insulted by this rejuvenated fad of turning films into theatre. In fact, he only has one deep regret and that's the stage-adaptation of cult zombie classic Evil Dead.

"I was devastated when I heard it was being done (for the stage)," said Brown. "I wanted to do it myself."

Britney did it again, online

INTERNET Britney Spears was the most popular search term on Yahoo for the fourth year in a row —her seventh time topping the list. Spears bested World Wrestling Entertainment, Barack Obama, Miley Cyrus and the online game RuneScape as the five most-searched terms of 2008. The announcement by Yahoo comes as the singer prepares to release her new album Circus.

Britney Spears

To compile their year-end review, Yahoo editors analyze search queries based on "absolute volume and growth versus previous periods, to see which themes and trends bubble to the surface." Users and their search queries remain anonymous.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadian filmmaker taking fresh bite out of flesh-eating zombie genre

CHRIS ALEXANDER
for Metro Canada

RETROSPECTIVE Flesh eating zombies have come a long way since George A. Romero first mythologized them in 1968, with his seminal shocker Night of the Living Dead.

Take the latest wallow in cannibal corpse mythology, Otto; Or Up With Dead People — a tender tale of a sexually frustrated zombie looking for love. This excursion into the existential dead just happens to be written, produced and directed by none other than legendary Canadian "queercore" film guru Bruce LaBruce.

The film — along with a number of the director's other works — screens this week as part of a first ever Bruce LaBruce retrospective, which starts tomorrow at Toronto's Royal Cinema.

Otto is LaBruce's first official entry into the world of horror, and is peppered with the same sexually-charged social satire that has made him such an enduring underground cinema cause celebre. The film is actually — by LaBruce's standards anyway (his other films graphically depict sex) — rather restrained.

If you go

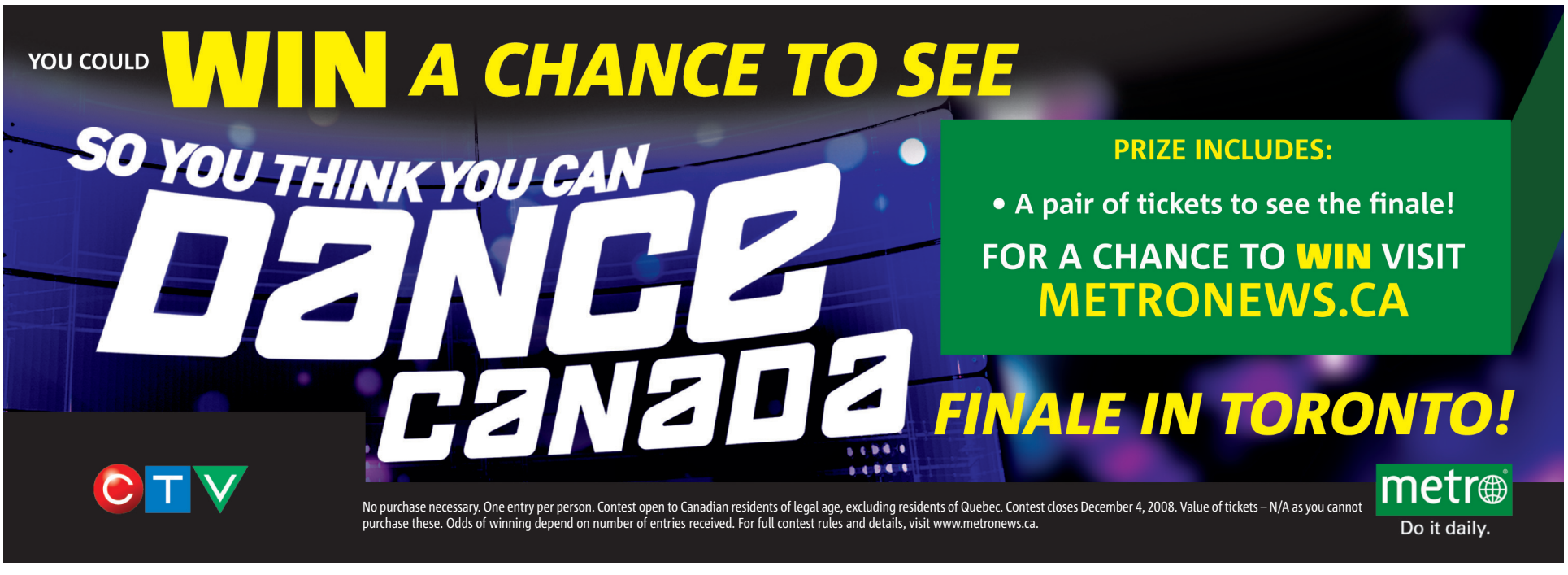
- Otto, Or Up With Dead People runs tomorrow through Dec. 11 at The Royal Cinema.
- The Bruce LaBruce Retrospective runs tomorrow through Saturday at The Royal Cinema in Toronto. A discussion on censorship in Canada takes place Saturday at 8:30 p.m.

"For me, Otto is the antidote to all of those torture horror films that are so popular now," says the boundary-pushing director.

"I was specifically referencing Herk Hervey's Carnival of Souls, George Romero's Martin and Curtis Harrington's obscure Night Tide, movies where you are never sure if the monsters really are monsters, or just misfits that don't fit into society. I like that ambiguity."

Though produced entirely in Germany, Otto is actually LaBruce's first picture to garner completion funding from both the Ontario and Canada film councils. This is a benchmark for the controversial filmmaker, who's work has received financing from everywhere but his home-and-native-land.

"For a long time it was impossible for me to find funding because of the explicit sexuality of the films," he said.



Zoolander sequel in the works

Funnyman Ben Stiller has confirmed he is working on a follow-up to his 2001 comedy hit Zoolander. IMDB.COM

Kids back in the hall

Comedian Dave Foley says the five-member troupe of Kids in the Hall is writing an eight-episode miniseries for the CBC.

The show would have the quirky comics playing a multitude of roles and feature an ongoing narrative.

"We're going to start writing that very soon," Foley said recently from the Gemini Awards, where he presented an award at a glitzy bash honouring the best in Canadian drama, variety and comedy TV.

"It'll be an eight-episode arc with a narrative running through it and we will play all the characters but it won't be sketch, it'll be a single narrative miniseries."

The project is tentatively titled, Death Comes to Town, and would serve as a long-awaited return by the Toronto-based group to the CBC.

That was where the improv troupe shot to fame in the late '80s and early '90s with their sketch comedy show, The Kids In the Hall, winning a dedicated fanbase that spilled into the U.S. when the series, produced by Saturday Night Live's Lorne Michaels, aired on CBS.

Their ludicrous characters and surreal worlds included Mark McKinney's sex-crazed chicken lady, Bruce McCulloch's sexist Cabbage Head, Scott Thompson's gay socialite Buddy Cole, and Kevin McDonald and Foley's insane Sizzler Sisters. After the show went off the air in 1994, each member went on to pursue independent projects in Canada and the United States.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Kids in the Hall's Dave Foley, Mark McKinney and Kevin McDonald perform at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas last month. The troupe will star in an eight-part miniseries for the CBC.

Hathaway, Riggs, Williams among indie nominees

FILM Anne Hathaway's family drama Rachel Getting Married, the border-smuggling tale Frozen River and the Deep South saga Ballast led the nominees for the Spirit Awards with six nominations each, including best picture.

Other best-picture nominees announced yesterday include Michelle Williams' down-on-her-luck drama, Wendy and Lucy, and Mickey Rourke's broken-down athlete tale The Wrestler.

Rourke has a best-actor nomination, along with Javier Bardem for Vicky Cristina Barcelona, Richard Jenkins for The Visitor, Sean Penn for Milk and Jeremy Renner for The Hurt Locker. The awards honour independent film.

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Lead actress

- Hathaway and Williams have lead actress nominations. Also in the category are Melissa Leo for Frozen River, Summer Bishil for Towelhead and Tarra Riggs for Ballast.

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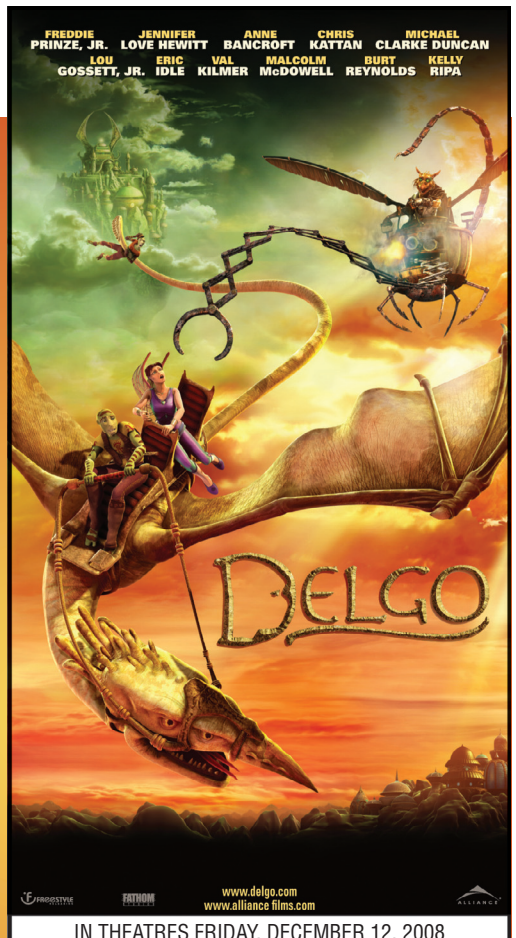

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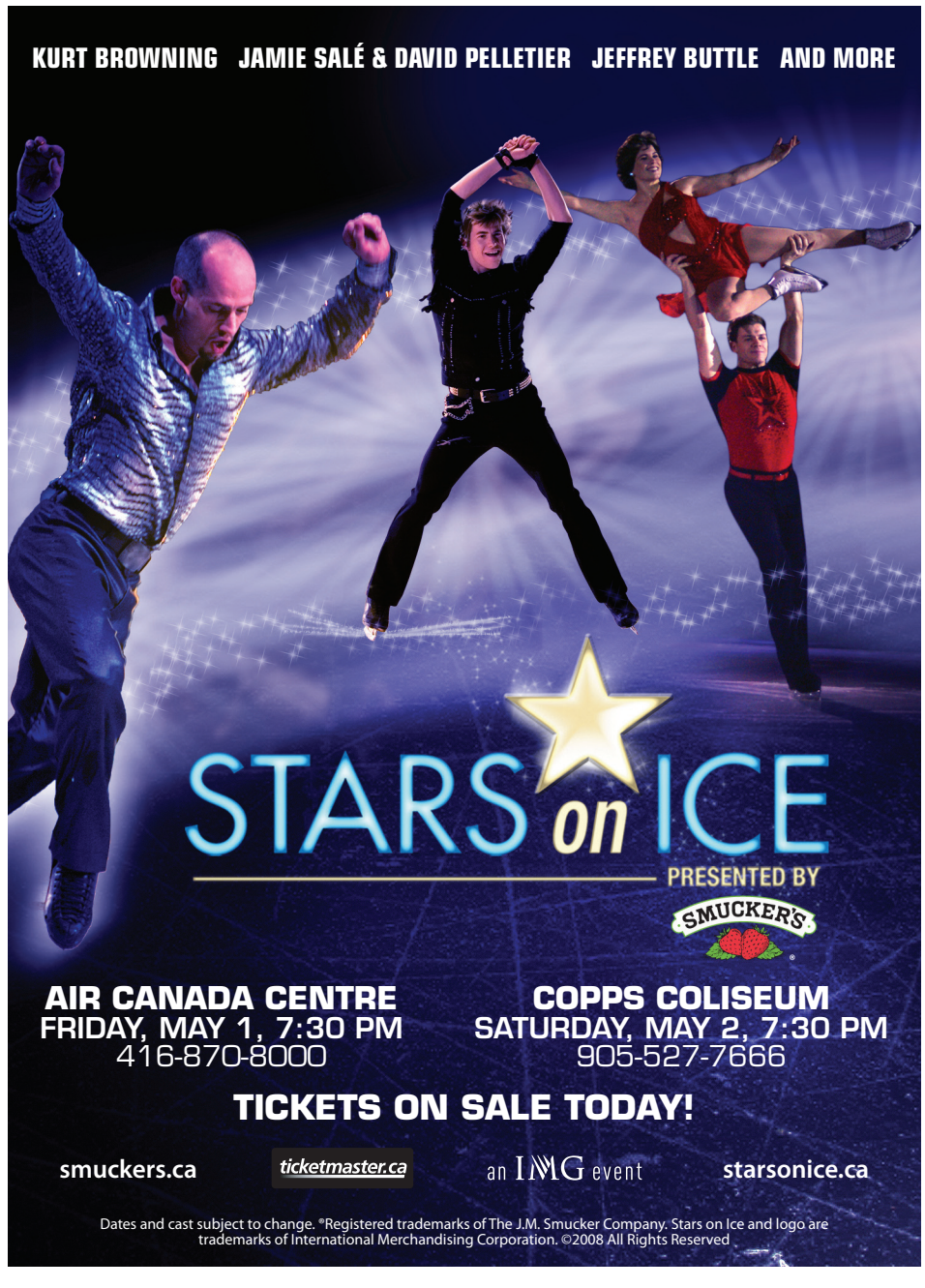

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Shia teams up with Grisham
Shia LaBeouf is set to star in a new John Grisham adaptation. The actor has agreed to take the lead role in thriller The Associate next year. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

No surprises on Walters' list

The people on Barbara Walters' list of The 10 Most Fascinating People probably won't shock you.

But that's not necessarily a bad thing. Maybe for this 16th annual edition, host Barbara Walters has rounded up the logical choices. For instance, who is gonna quarrel with including Olympic superswimmer Michael Phelps?

Or the United States' most famous hockey mom, Sarah Palin (who also happens to be governor of Alaska, a former vice-presidential candidate and, some say, the future of the Republican party)?

Or what about 30 Rock star Tina Fey, who helped define Palin to a national electorate with her hilarious impersonation on NBC's Saturday Night Live. Or Rush Limbaugh, the powerful conservative pundit who is now getting ready to take on a new Democratic president.

"This was almost the easiest year that we've ever had, because we had so many naturals."
TV broadcaster Barbara Walters

Or like 16-year-old singer-actress Miley Cyrus. Though wildly popular as star of Disney Channel's Hannah Montana, she's become "a new Miley Cyrus," says Walters. "She's growing up." Maybe not so obvious is Thomas Beatie, who will be interviewed as a representative of what Walters calls a larger subject — the emergence of transgender couples.

Frank Langella is yet another name on her list. Why? After decades as an acclaimed actor, the 70-year-old Langella has the buzz of a latter-day breakout star thanks to his new film, Frost/Nixon, Walters says.

By now, she has the winnowing process down to a science — including how she handles those who didn't make the final cut.

"If a celebrity's press agent calls, we say, 'You were right there, you were the 11th! Maybe next year,'" Walters jokes.

As usual, the No. 1 Most Fascinating Person of 2008 will be announced on the program. But even here, a jaw-dropping surprise seems unlikely.

After all, could it be anyone but U.S. president-elect Barack Obama?

"I would be the last one to tell you," laughed Walters, refusing to give her interrogator even a hint. "You could very well be right — but, then again, you never know."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

George Stroumboulopoulos

MuchMusic cans trademark show NewMusic

TV George Stroumboulopoulos says watching The NewMusic was one of the best ways to learn about great bands.

After nearly 30 years on the air, the seminal MuchMusic program has halted production.

The announcement comes in the wake of the 105 jobs cuts by the CTV network last week.

The weekly show gave viewers a look into what was new and cool in the music world.

It was hosted by the likes of Jeanne Beker, J.D. Roberts, Daniel Richler, Laurie Brown, Denise Donlon and Stroumboulopoulos, who now hosts The Hour on CBC.

Stroumboulopoulos says he wishes The NewMusic could have stayed on the air for another three decades.

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Gregory Smith on Eli Stone
Everwood alum Gregory Smith is among the ensemble to guest star on the 13th episode of Eli Stone's second season. TVGUIDE.COM

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Worker admits selling stars' medical records

A former employee of UCLA Medical Centre has pleaded guilty to selling information from the medical records of celebrities and high-profile patients, including Britney Spears and Farrah Fawcett, to the National Enquirer.

Lawanda Jackson, 49, spoke quietly as she entered her plea to the felony charge of violating federal medical privacy law for commercial purposes in U.S. District Court.

Jackson and her attorney, Angel Navarro, declined to comment after the hearing.

Jackson worked as an administrative specialist at the UCLA hospitals for 32 years and in recent years began using her supervisor's password to access medical records inappropriately.

The tabloid deposited cheques totalling at least $4,600 into her husband's chequing account beginning in 2006. Jackson and state officials have disclosed that records for Spears, Fawcett and California first lady Maria Shriver were among those breached. Fawcett's attorney said that the star's cancer diagnosis and treatment details showed up in the National Enquirer.

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- Jackson faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, and a $250,000 fine.
- Sentencing is set for May.

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Lopez to host Miss America again
After a year off, Mario Lopez of Extra returns to host the Miss America pageant, to be televised live from Las Vegas on Jan. 24. **PEOPLE.COM**

Battlestar prequel good to go

IntelleVision

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"I think, because (Battlestar Galactica's) backdrop was space and spaceships, there was a barrier to entry for some viewers. Caprica has none of that. It's an intense family drama set on an Earth-like planet in the near future."
Dave Howe

GEEK CHRISTMAS CAME EARLY THIS YEAR: It's been sort of on and maybe off so many times now that I've gotten tired of getting hopes up, but according to Variety, the Battlestar Galactica prequel Caprica has been given the green light by the Sci Fi Channel.

With the end in sight for Galactica — the last half of the fourth season begins in January and ends on March 20 — Sci Fi needs something to keep its basement-dwelling, WoW-playing, Trek convention-going, figurine-collecting constituency pumped up, though they might have to subsist on Galactica's vapours (and a few weekend-long Babylon 5 marathons) until then.

"We want people to come to this who have never heard of Battlestar Galactica," Dave Howe, Sci Fi president, told Variety. "I think, because (Battlestar Galactica's) backdrop was space and spaceships, there was a barrier to entry for some viewers. Caprica has none of that. It's an intense family drama set on an Earth-like planet in the near future, speaking to a lot of the ethical dilemmas that we as a human race are going to have to face very shortly."

As everyone knows, prime among those "ethical dilemmas" is whether you should sleep with your sexy humanoid robot, so it's all good in geekland, especially since the pilot for the show was completed months ago and will likely be leaked to file-sharing sites quicker than you can say, "Greedo shot first."

STONEHENGE, THE PYRAMIDS, ACCORDING TO JIM: You don't have to be ancient or huge to be a wonder — you only have to last well beyond even the most generous expectations of your apparently invisible fans, at least according to TV critic Alan Sepinwall of New Jersey's Star-Ledger.

Sepinwall was writing on the occasion of this week's return of According To Jim to the airwaves for its eighth season, which he calls "an amazing feat, not just in the history of television, but possibly in the history of mankind itself."

Among the shows the Jim Belushi vehicle has outlasted on the small screen are The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Taxi, The Honeymooners and I Love Lucy. Since it first aired on ABC, According To Jim has buried Arrested Development, Undeclared, Andy Richter Controls the Universe and Back To You, and held its own against 24, NCIS and American Idol. If it survives another season, it will have matched The Cosby Show for longevity and produced more episodes than Seinfeld. With that thought, let's pause for a moment and heave a deep, soul-shuddering sob before continuing with our apparently meaningless lives.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

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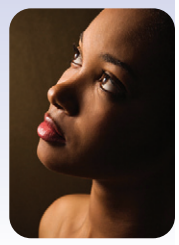

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Spears to tour Canada in spring

CONCERTS Britney Spears is taking her Circus act on the road next year and will make stops in Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton and Vancouver.

In an appearance on ABC's Good Morning America, the pop star announced that her North American arena tour will open March 3 in New Orleans.

Her new album, Circus, hit stores yesterday on her 27th birthday.

It is Spears' first tour in five years as she gains career momentum and stability in her personal life.

Her 27-city itinerary includes shows at Toronto's Air Canada Centre on March 18, Montreal's Bell Centre on March 20, Edmonton's Rexall Place on April 6 and Vancouver's GM Place on April 8.

Tickets go on sale beginning Saturday.

The North American tour will also visit Atlanta, Miami, Boston, Houston, Dallas, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Las Vegas before wrapping up on April 28 in Chicago.

Spears has also scheduled shows in London on June 3 and 4.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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	214	344	7 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Friends	Friends	Stylista (N)		I Love Money		News (N)
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	213	326	15 SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	*Nutcracker: The Motion Picture* ★★ (1986, Fantasy)				To Serve and Protect		Grill Rm.
	-	387	16 CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Red-Nosed Reindeer		Grammy Nominations Concert		Victoria's Secret Fashion		News (N)
	-	385	17 NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Christmas in Rockefeller		Life (HDTV) (N)		Law & Order (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
	-	386	18 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Pushing Daisies (N)		Private Practice (N)		(10:01) Dirty Sexy Money		News
	219	346	20 ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Monk		Private Practice (N)		(10:01) Dirty Sexy Money		News (N)
	-	-	28 FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	Secret Millionaire (Series Premiere) (N)				Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61 PBS	News-Lehrer	Vicar of Dibley	Monarchy: The Royal Family at Work The Queen's children discuss their working roles.						Business Rpt.
	297	652	330 WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Stylista "Clip Show"		Stylista (N)		CW11 News at Ten (N)		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331 SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV) (N)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332 TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Stylista
news	502	390	26 NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour Sonja Bata.		CBC News: The National		Fast Food Junkies (N)		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79 CNB	CNBC Reports				On the Money		The Big Idea With Deutsch		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22 net	UEFA Cup Soccer Manchester City vs. Paris Saint Germain FC.				Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	400	400	30 TSN	NHL Hockey Atlanta Thrashers at Ottawa Senators. (HDTV) (Live)					NHL Hockey Dallas Stars at Edmonton Oilers.			
	411	457	58 OLN	Ed's Up	Videos	The Amazing Race 13		Amazing	Ed's Up	Word Travels	Globe Guides	Pilot Guides
	417	406	81 SC	Pinks	Pass Time	Am. Thunder	Am. Thunder	Pinks	Pinks Outtakes	Knuckles	Wrecked	Pinks
family	551	542	25 YTV	Malcolm-Mid.	Home Improve.	Malcolm-Mid.	Fresh Prince	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline Proj	Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45 TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	The Critic	Robot Chicken	Daughter-Devil
	556	540	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27 W	Will & Grace	Friends	Grocery Bag	Maxed Out	Supersize vs. Superskinny		She's Got the Look		Style by Jury
	570	580	29 MM	Britney: For The Record			Punk'd	Countdown to Britney		Britney: For The Record		
	615	520	31 A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars
	700	800	35 TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	L'Onore e il Rispetto				Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36 MMM	mmmtop	MusicProfile	Back In	Back In...Love	Revival	Where You At	Fabulous Life Of...		Party of Five
	575	583	38 CMT	Cheerleaders	Cheerleaders	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Jason McCoy
	616	521	39 SHO	Kink in Hair	Kink in Hair	Durham County		Billable Hours	G-Spot	Starter Wife		House
	620	523	40 BVO	Desperate Housewives		Berkeley	Bravo!Videos	Wingfield	Letters	Arts & Minds	The Achievers	Law & Order
	601	562	41 SLC	End of Leash	ET Canada	Last 10	Bulging Brides	Work Out		Real Housewives of NYC		Last 10
	522	506	43 HIS	NCIS "Twilight"		Cities of the Underworld		Captain Cook: Obsession		NCIS "Kill Ari"		Crime Stories
	625	548	44 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	House Party	RENO 911!	Daily Show
	600	564	46 H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Mansions	The Stagers	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Million Dollar Listing		Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47 TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*Election* ★★★ (1999, Comedy) Matthew Broderick.				Cheers	Seinfeld	Family Guy
	576	582	49 BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*Double Take* ★ (2001, Comedy) Eddie Griffin.				Brother	Brother	Black Carpet
	627	528	50 SPC	Lost		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Battlestar Galactica		Ghost Hunters International (N)		Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52 MTV	Busted	After	MTV News	Cribs	Paris Hilton's My New BFF		Dance Life	Dance Life	MTV Live
	618	524	54 TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210		Reality	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show	Family Guy
	603	561	56 FOOD	The Main	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Iron Chef America		Top Chef		Dinner Imposs.
	261	394	60 V	Murder, She Wrote		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	Darling Buds of May		Enigma "Hypnosis"		Hope Island
	621	527	63 STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		Paris Hilton's My New BFF		Paris Hilton's My New BFF		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ (N)
	553	546	65 TRE	Dora-Explorer	Nght Grdn	Friend Rabbit	Franklin	Little Bear	Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Beren. Bears
	115	711	101 TVA	Que feriez-	Poule-oeufs or	Destinées (N) (SC)		Les Soeurs Elliot (N) (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
	126	730	102 RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249 VIVA	Judging Amy		Commander In Chief		The West Wing		Mediums	Psychic Detect	Mediums
	300	601	301 M1	*Jane*	(7:25) *My Daughter's Secret* (2007)			*Cloverfield* ★★★ (2008, Science Fiction)			*Time Bomb* (2007)	
	305	612	306 PIX	*Airplane 2*	*Murray Maguire, M.E.* (2001, Mystery)			*The Usual Suspects* ★★★ (1995, Suspense)				(10:50) *Dirty*

critics'corner

Sophie
It's little Robbie's first birthday, and everyone's there to celebrate, including his father, Andre (Lyriq Bent), in this new episode. And since he's only 1 year old, it probably doesn't register on him that someone is stealing the spotlight. See, Rick (Sebastian Spence) is there with his new client, who turns out to be the hit of the party. Natalie Brown also stars in "Bursting Balloons." 8:30 PM on CBC

The Usual Suspects
Hey, Keyser Soze is a chick! No, wait, that was "The Crying Game." This similarly twisty, darkly funny and grippingly suspenseful 1995 crime drama earned a richly deserved Oscar for supporting actor Kevin Spacey, who is brilliant as a criminal underling being grilled about an underworld mastermind's latest violent spree. The gifted ensemble cast (Gabriel Byrne, Benicio Del Toro and others) revels in the snappy dialogue. 9:15 AM on PIX

Scrubs gets a new chief

Scrubs gets a new network and a new chief of medicine — Courteney Cox Arquette. The NBC comedy is now on ABC, with Cox Arquette appearing in the Season 8 premiere on Jan. 6 as Dr. Maddox in the first of three episodes. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Gossip set spawns another romance?

RUMOURS There's a new couple on the set of Gossip Girl — Ed Westwick and Jessica Szohr are reportedly dating, imdb.com reports.

Westwick was rumoured to be involved with actress Drew Barrymore, but he has now sent gossips into a spin by apparently stepping out with co-star Szohr.

The couple was spotted canoodling at an airport in Dallas, Tex., as they waited to catch a flight to New York on Sunday.

"They were trying to be discreet by stealing kisses near the gate," a source tells New York Post gossip column PageSix. The pair boarded the plane and, according to the source, "They were kissing in the aisles, but once they sat, she read her script and he drank a Heineken."

A representative for both stars said, "We do not discuss our clients' personal life."

It wouldn't be the first time romance had blossomed on the set of the hit teen drama: Blake Lively and Penn Badgley are dating after meeting each other through the show.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Madonna, A-Rod house-hunting?

PEOPLE Madonna and Alex Rodriguez are quietly shopping for love nests on the Upper East Side and on the East End, sources told Page Six.

"Madonna personally came to look at one house a couple of months ago, and Alex has been looking recently," an insider said. "We're talking about private, double-width mansions in the vicinity of $30 million to $60 million US."

The pop star and baseball player are also interested in scoring a house "with a garage that you can drive into for additional privacy — although those are rare and hard to come by," the source added. Another source said they were also looking in the Hamptons, N.Y.

Madonna's rep didn't return a call or e-mail, but Rodriguez's reps denied the two were looking for real estate.

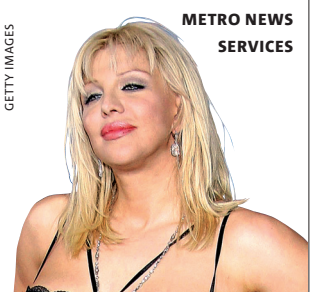
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Love opens up about drug use

PEOPLE Rocker Courtney Love has been completely honest with her daughter about her battle with drugs, even telling the youngster she allegedly took heroin during her pregnancy, femalefirst.co.uk reports. Love insists she didn't know she was expecting at the time.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES



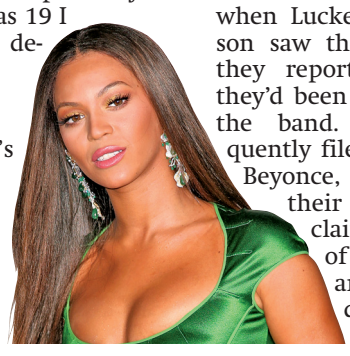
Destiny drama was hard

PEOPLE R&B singer Beyonce Knowles struggled with depression for two years when her former group Destiny's Child went through a series of line-up changes, because everyone blamed her for the band's troubles, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

"For a couple of years when I was 19 I suffered depression," Knowles said.

Destiny's Child's original lineup consisted of Knowles, Kelly Rowland, and childhood friends LeToya Luckett and LaTavia Roberson. But singers Michelle Williams and Farrah Franklin were hired to replace the reportedly disgruntled members and the new group went on to shoot the video to hit single Say My Name.

However, it was only when Luckett and Roberson saw the promo that they reportedly realized they'd been kicked out of the band. They subsequently filed suit against Beyonce, Rowland and their manager, claiming breach of partnership and fiduciary duties. METRO NEWS SERVICES



Lindsay, Sam still together

RUMOURS Lindsay Lohan has taken to her online blog to slam reports she is to split from girlfriend Samantha Ronson, imdb.com reports.

The pair, who have been dating since earlier this year, have been dogged with rumours of a breakup following a spate of arguements.

The couple was recently spotted arguing in New York, and Britain's The Sun newspaper reported last month they had a spat outside a London nightclub, with Lohan left "in tears" after the incident.

But the actress is sick of the rumours, and is adamant she and Ronson are still together.

She writes on her MySpace blog, "Rumors … Just to clear this up … Because I have been getting a lot of e-mails asking me this one question. Samantha Ronson and Lindsay Lohan (me) are not breaking up," before ending the posting with a smiley face.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Brangelina can't cook

PEOPLE Actor Brad Pitt is ashamed of his poor cookery skills but insists his partner Angelina Jolie is no better, announcing the best meal she has prepared for him is "cereal," imdb.com reports.

The couple has six children together, but Pitt admits that neither of them are able to conjure up a meal for their family because they just can't cook.

"I can rock a Sunday BBQ but that's as far as my culinary talents go," Pitt says.

When asked what Jolie's signature dish would be, Pitt replied, "Cereal."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Dunst gets restraining order

PEOPLE Actress Kirsten Dunst has been granted a restraining order against an intruder who was found on her estate last month, imdb.com reports.

Dunst wasn't at home when the alleged trespasser, Christopher Smith, was apprehended and escorted off the property.

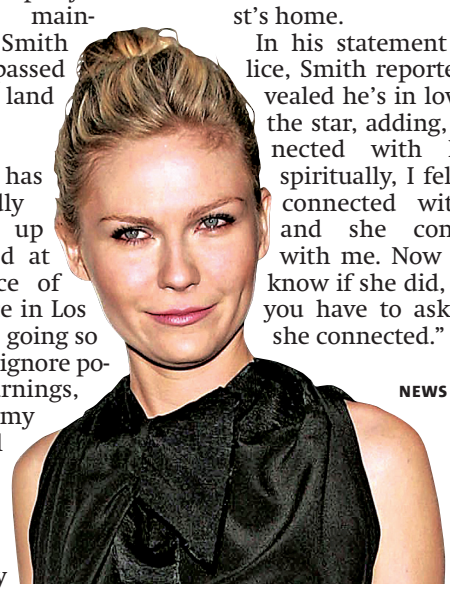
Dunst maintains Smith has trespassed on her land before.

"Mr. Smith has repeatedly shown up uninvited at my place of residence in Los Angeles, going so far as to ignore police warnings, bypass my personal security measures, trespass on my property, and attempt to gain entry into my home," Dunst states in court documents. "I fear not only for my own personal safety, but also for the safety and well being of my housemate and assistant."

Los Angeles police have confirmed they did apprehend an intruder at Dunst's home.

In his statement to police, Smith reportedly revealed he's in love with the star, adding, "I connected with Kirsten spiritually, I felt like I connected with her and she connected with me. Now I don't know if she did, I guess you have to ask her if she connected."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Fame made me stronger: Kate

PEOPLE Kate Bosworth struggled to handle her "brutal" Hollywood success as a youngster but is adamant the experience helped her to become a better person, imdb.com reports.

The actress landed her first big role at the age of 13 when she starred alongside Scarlett Johansson in 1998 film The Horse Whisperer, before really gaining the public's attention at 19 in hit surfer movie Blue Crush.

Bosworth has since gone on to star in a string of Hollywood films, including the coveted role of Lois Lane in blockbuster movie Superman Returns.

She says she believes her experience of fame as a child helped to make her "stronger."

"The obsession with the young Hollywood group happened when I was young and in Hollywood. It sort of coincided all at the same time," Bosworth says. "At the time, when you're being dissected and judged it's pretty brutal, but in hindsight it's great and — it sounds cliched — you do come out the other side better and stronger."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gossip Girl star expecting No. 2

FAMILY Gossip Girl star Kelly Rutherford is expecting her second child, imdb.com reports.

The 40-year-old and her entrepreneur husband, Daniel Giersch, are due to welcome the new baby in June, a representative confirmed to Usmagazine.com

The actress, who plays Lilly van der Woodsen in the hit U.S. show, already has a two-year-old son, Hermès, with her partner.

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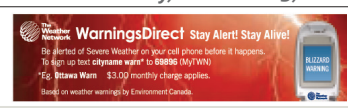
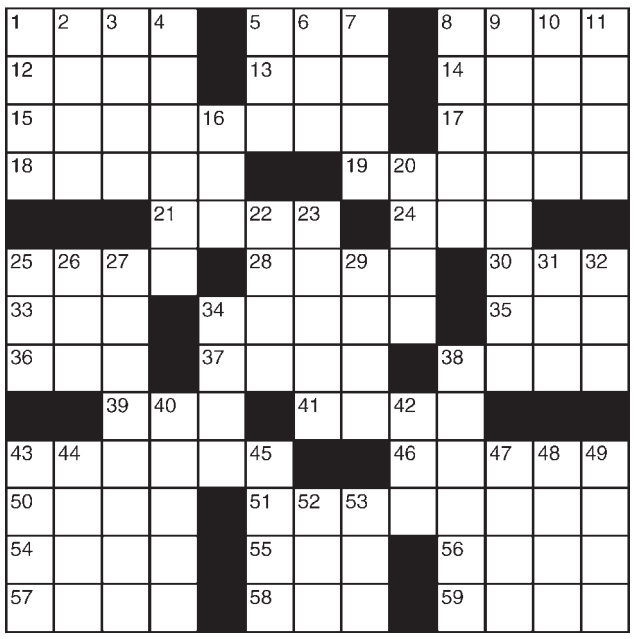
Friday Partly cloudy -3° / -7°



Take Five

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**



Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

			2				1	6
4	3				6			
1				9			7	4
	6			8		9		
5								1
		7		5			6	
8	1			2				9
			9				2	3
6	2				1			

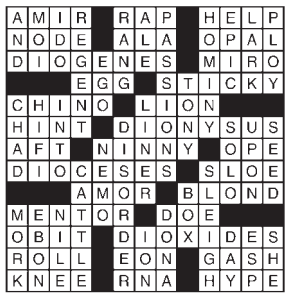
Crossword across

1 Funny folks
5 Every iota
8 State
12 Birthright barterer
13 Pod denizen
14 Unembellished
15 Word-for-word
17 Met melody
18 Third rock from the Sun
19 Applied the first coat
21 Stromboli spillage
24 Popular card game
25 With 34-Across, kind of number a ZIP code generally is
28 Morays
30 Guitar's kin
33 Raw rock
34 See 25-Across
35 Afternoon affair
36 Apiece
37 Muhammad and Laila
38 Burn around the edges
39 Resistance measure
41 Gandhi wrapper?
43 Tomorrow, in Tijuana
46 Join together
50 Ear-related
51 Spine component
54 Make fun of
55 Have bills
56 Encounter
57 Hot tubs
58 Take a spouse
59 Big hatchets

Crossword down

1 "— Only Just Begun"
2 Cruising
3 "Young Frankenstein" actress Teri
4 Hardly blunt
5 Suitable
6 Floral garland
7 Aladdin's prop
8 Forcefully
9 Martini ingredient
10 A Great Lake
11 Peruse
16 "Eureka!"
20 Oxidationoutcome
22 Bridal concealer
23 Sponsorship
25 Dandy
26 Rage
27 Brunette in the "Archie" comics
29 Bart's sister
31 Mauna —
32 Hearing organ
34 Rhett's shocking word
38 Hollywood industry
40 Cabbies
42 Trench
43 Some parents
44 On
45 Acknowledge
47 Mountain goat
48 Genealogy chart
49 Diner sign
52 Ram's mate
53 Roulette bet

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



6	3	7	4	8	5	9	1	2
2	9	5	3	1	7	8	6	4
8	1	4	6	2	9	5	7	3
3	6	1	2	9	8	7	4	5
9	7	2	5	4	6	1	3	8
4	5	8	1	7	3	2	9	6
5	2	3	7	6	1	4	8	9
1	4	9	8	3	2	6	5	7
7	8	6	9	5	4	3	2	1

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SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Mustard-Tarragon Chicken Sauté

INGREDIENTS:

2 teaspoons olive oil
4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (about 1 1/2 lbs/750 g), pounded to 1/2-inch thickness
2 tablespoons flour
5 scallions, cut into 1-in. (2.5-cm) lengths
3/4 cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
4 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon or 1 tsp (5 mL) dried
1 small tomato, seeded and diced
1/4 cup diced gherkin pickle

METHOD:

1. In large non-stick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Dredge chicken in flour, shaking off excess. Add chicken to pan and sauté 4 minutes per side or until golden brown. With slotted spoon, transfer chicken to plate.
2. Add scallions to pan and cook 1 minute. Add broth and vinegar, and bring to a boil. Stir in mustard and tarragon, and return to a boil. Stir in tomato and pickle. Return chicken to pan, reduce to simmer, cover, and cook 5 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and sauce is richly flavoured. Serve chicken with sauce spooned on top.

SERVES 4

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For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Don't insist on deadlines being met. A viable concept will be seen to work. You'll be severe if you're asked tough questions.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A friend refuses to take part in any risk-taking. Someone needs your help. A phone call creates momentary forgetfulness.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
A man's attempt to expose corruption is irritating. Certain plans are best kept secret for a short time. A carefree person brings good news.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Eliminate misery from your vocabulary. Trivial pleasures can cause social snobbery to arise. Don't jump to conclusions.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
You'll find treats in the least likely place. Everything will work out if you're patient. A woman will make a dreadful error.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Do some walking to find what you really want. Face up to your motivation to change your life. Tie up any loose ends.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
You'll want to retreat from the world. You may have lost the ability to focus on conversations. Your feelings will improve by tomorrow.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Mixed fortunes will prevail. Your values are called into question. Fear of the unknown causes everything to bog down.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Invite your friends and family to visit. Give in to the merriness of a great moment. Nothing lasts forever.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Someone is trying to pull a fast one. An anxious friend laughs too hard. Domestic difficulties will be remarkably advantageous.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Be courageous and give something a try. It's your turn to be a hero. An old flame is living on a lonely street.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Emotions will be on public display. It's not a good day to spend lazing around. Carelessness will have someone all worked up.

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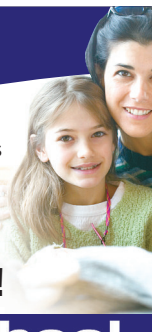
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HWY: 5.9 L/100KM 48 MPG
CITY: 7.3 L/100KM 39 MPG

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One of the Greenest Vehicles in its segment‡

EX model shown

2009 Rio

- 4-cylinder 1.6L CVVT engine
- Standard 6-way adjustable driver's seat
- AM/FM/CD/MP3 stereo with USB & AUX audio inputs
- Bluetooth® hands-free cell phone capability❖
- 60/40 split-folding rear seats
- Variable intermittent windshield wipers
- Tilt adjustable steering column
- 4-door sedan

OWN IT FROM
$9,995◆
CASH PURCHASE PRICE

HWY: 7.5 L/100KM 38 MPG
CITY: 10.6 L/100KM 27 MPG

★★★★★ 5-STAR CRASH TEST RATING
NHTSA - Frontal impacts††

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One of the Greenest Vehicles in its segment‡

LX model shown

2009 Rondo

- 4-cylinder 2.4L CVVT, or available 2.7L CVVT V6 engine
- Automatic Steptronic transmission
- Air conditioning • Available 7-seater • Standard six airbags
- Standard ABS with Electronic Stability Control & Traction Control System
- Bluetooth® hands-free cell phone capability❖
- Power windows, locks and heated side mirrors
- Standard 16" alloy wheels

OWN IT FROM
$16,995◆ NO GST§
CASH PURCHASE PRICE
GST DISCOUNT INCLUDED

0%

FINANCING ON ALL 2009 MODELS❖

OR

NO PAYMENTS UNTIL SPRING*

NO GST

on select 2008 and 2009 models§

HWY: 8.8 L/100KM 32 MPG
CITY: 13.2 L/100KM 21 MPG

★★★★★ 5-STAR CRASH TEST RATING
NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

TOP SAFETY PICK 2009
INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

EX model shown

2009 Sedona LX

- 3.8L 24-valve CVVT V6 engine
- 5-speed automatic transmission
- Standard six airbags & ABS
- Extended wheelbase
- Standard back-up warning system

OWN IT FROM
$19,995◆
CASH PURCHASE PRICE

HWY: 7.8 L/100KM 36 MPG
CITY: 10.3 L/100KM 27 MPG

★★★★★ 5-STAR CRASH TEST RATING
NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

LX model shown

2009 Sportage

REDESIGNED FOR '09

- 2.0L CVVT, or available 2.7L V6 engine
- Standard six airbags & 4-wheel ABS
- Standard Electronic Stability Control & Traction Control System
- AM/FM/CD/MP3 stereo with USB & AUX audio inputs
- Bluetooth® hands-free cell phone capability❖

OWN IT FROM
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Hurry, offer ends January 2nd

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◆Cash purchase price for 2009 Rio EX MT (RO5429)/2009 Sedona LX (SD7519)/2009 Rondo LX AT (RN7519)/2009 Sportage LX MT (SP5519) is $9,995/$19,995/$16,995/$16,995 and includes a cash rebate of $3,600/$6,750/$2,106/$3,806 based on an MSRP of $13,595/$26,745/$19,995/$21,695. Delivery and destination fees of $1,455/$1,650/$1,650/$1,650 excluded. License, registration, insurance, dealer administration fees and taxes are excluded. Other lease and finance options also available. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Prices subject to change without notice. Certain restrictions may apply. ❖0% purchase financing available on all 2009 models for a term of up to 36 months on approved credit (O.A.C.). Term varies by model. ❋No finance payments until April 30, 2009 available on all 2009 models, O.A.C. Maximum terms apply. Purchase financing example: $10,000 at 2.9% purchase financing equals $179 per month for 60 months; cost of borrowing (C.O.B.) is $755 for a total obligation of $10,755. Monthly payment and C.O.B. will vary depending on amount borrowed, the term and down payment/trade. 1% will be added to the applicable interest rate. Offer may not be available through all Kia lending partners. See your local participating Kia dealership for full details. Other lease and finance options available. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Prices subject to change without notice. §"No GST" on 2008 and 2009 Sportage/Rondo/Spectra/Spectra5 models. GST for lease customers is calculated based on the vehicle lease obligation. Customer must pay GST at the time of purchase; Kia will reimburse customer the GST amount to be used on monthly or down payments. GST will not be reimbursed on additional options or equipment. See your local participating Kia dealership for full details. >Highway/city fuel consumption for 2009 Rio EX MT is 5.9 L (48 MPG)/7.3 L (39 MPG); 2009 Sedona LX is 8.8 L (32 MPG)/13.2 L (21 MPG); 2009 Rondo LX is 7.5 L (38 MPG)/10.6 L (27 MPG); 2009 Sportage LX MT is 7.8 L (36 MPG)/10.3 L (27 MPG) per 100km. The actual fuel consumption of these vehicles may vary. These estimates are based on the Government of Canada's approved criteria and testing methods. Refer to the Government of Canada publication EnerGuide Fuel Consumption Guide. ‡Green Score for Kia Rio/Rondo based on manual/automatic transmission specification within their segment. Refer to GreenerCars.org for full details. †NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) test results. Visit www.safercar.gov for full details. ✧2009 Sedona awarded the Top Safety Pick by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Visit www.iihs.org for full details. ^Conditions apply to the $500 Grad Rebate program, see dealer for details. +Some conditions may apply to the $750 Kia Mobility program. See dealer for details. ✜Late availability on Bluetooth hands-free option. ▼Kia's "Worry-Free Comprehensive" warranty covers most vehicle components against defects occurring under normal use and maintenance conditions. Bluetooth technology and SIRIUS® Satellite Radio available on select 2009 models. © 2008 SIRIUS Canada Inc. See dealer for details. Price, availability and specifications are subject to changes without notice. Some vehicles advertised may include optional accessories or after-sale equipment and may not be exactly as shown. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of print. Offer ends January 2, 2009 and is valid for residents of Ontario/Manitoba only. KIA is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation.